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Putin vows tough response to 'attack on nation' that left 156 kids dead

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Air Force mauled by Bears in opener

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Air Force freshman quarterback Shaun Carney, center, gets hit by California's Joe Maningo, left, and Ryan Gutierrez during the Falcons' 56-14 loss at the U.S. Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs on Saturday. Air Force, held to 56 yards in the second half, gave up 573 yards and the most points on opening day in school history. See Pages 29 and 30 for details about Saturday's football action on campus.

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News Tracker ... What's new with old news

World

Japanese princess in hiding: Japan's Crown Princess Masako, who is recovering from a psychological disorder brought on by the pressures of royal life, left her Tokyo residence for the first time in four months on Saturday to visit Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko, an official said.

Crown Prince Naruhito accompanied his wife on the visit to the Imperial Palace, which lasted about an hour, the Imperial Household Agency said.

Palestinian vote: Palestinians launched a voter registration drive Saturday, a first step toward long-overdue elections, and Yasser Arafat promised that voting for parliament and president would take place this winter.

Arafat was one of the first of some 1.8 million eligible voters to register, presenting his passport at a polling station in his headquarters in the West Bank city of Ramallah. The Palestinian leader, confined to the compound by Israel for more than two years, gave the building as his address.

Japan nuclear accident: Dozens of police officers on Saturday raided the Tokyo offices of Kansai Electric at the site of Japan's worst nuclear plant accident as part of a criminal investigation into the tragedy that killed five people last month, an official said.

The electric utility and Nihon Arm Co., an affiliated company, are under investigation on suspicion of professional negligence resulting in death and injury following the Aug. 9 accident at the Mihama nuclear power plant, said Shunichi Nosaka, deputy head of Tsuruga city police.

West Nile virus: A woman in the northern border state of Sonora became the first Mexican of the year to contract West Nile virus, but received treatment and is expected to recover, the Health Department said Friday.

The victim, whose name was not released, fell ill July 6 in Enchigo, Sonora, Dr. Francisco Javier Navarro, the Health Department's director of community services, said in a statement.

States

Spacewalk: Leaving their orbiting outpost unmanned, the international space station's two astronauts floated outside on a spacewalk Friday and plugged in new antennas and replaced a worn-out piece of cooling equipment.



BO FLANNIGAN/Courtesy of the U.S. Navy

Under cover of darkness: A "shooter" signals to launch an EA-6B Prowler off the flight deck of USS Kitty Hawk during nighttime flight operations. The carrier conducts flight operations around the clock to ensure optimum proficiency for pilots, squadron and ship personnel.

Gennady Padalka and Mike Fincke installed three antennas for a new type of cargo carrier to be launched by the European Space Agency to the space station late next year and replaced a 2-foot-square Russian pump panel, part of a critical system for cooling station equipment.

Bird flu: Cats not only can catch the deadly bird flu but can spread it to other felines, Dutch researchers said in a report that raises important questions about the pets' role in outbreaks.

So far, cats have not been implicated in the spread of avian flu to people, said Dr. Klaus Stöhr, the World Health Organization's influenza chief, from Washington, D.C.

Nader campaign: Ralph Nader should be allowed on the Michigan ballot as an independent candidate for president, the Michigan Court of Appeals ruled Friday.

Nader earlier had lost a bid to get on the Michigan ballot as the Reform Party's presidential candidate.

U.S. District Court Judge Bernard Friedman ruled Wednesday that Secretary of State Terri Lynn Land could not be expected to decide which of two rival Reform Party factions in Michigan was the proper representative. One has nominated Nader, but Land has said she wouldn't recognize the nomination until the two factions decide which one was the legitimate representative.

Polygamy conviction: The Utah Supreme

Court on Friday denied an appeal from a man convicted of having five wives who argued that anti-bigamy laws violated his First Amendment right to religious freedom.

Attorney John Bucher had argued polygamy was part of Tom Green's religion, and that Utah's laws for cohabitation were so vague that Green had no way to know he was in violation.

FCC Super Bowl fines: The Federal Communications Commission is set to vote unanimously for a record-setting fine against CBS-owned stations for violating broadcast decency standards with the network's January breast-bearing Super Bowl halftime show, though some commissioners are expected to say the fines are not severe enough, FCC sources said.

The \$550,000 indecency fine would be the largest levied against a television broadcaster.

Michael Jackson case: Michael Jackson, facing child-molestation allegations, acknowledged he has reached financial settlements with people in the past to avoid the embarrassment of going to court, but added he would never harm a child.

The six-paragraph statement was released hours before the broadcast of a lengthy television report alleging that the entertainer paid \$2 million to the son of an employee at his Neverland Ranch in 1990 to avoid a child-molestation accusation.

Stories and photo from wire services

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Suicide bomber kills 20 in Kirkuk

BY YEHA BARZANJI
The Associated Press

KIRKUK, Iraq — A suicide attacker detonated a car bomb Saturday outside an Iraqi police academy as hundreds of trainees and civilians were leaving for the day, killing 20 people and wounding 36 others in the latest attack designed to thwart U.S.-backed efforts to build a strong Iraqi security force ahead of January elections.

U.S. and Iraqi forces, meanwhile, launched an operation in another northern town, Tal Afar, to flush out a militant cell allegedly smuggling men and arms in from Syria, sparking a fierce gunbattle that left at least eight people dead and more than 50 injured.

South of Baghdad, attackers fired mortar rounds at an Iraqi police patrol, killing three officers, said Col. Adnan Abdul-Kahman of the Interior Ministry. The attack occurred between the towns of Mahmudiya and Latifiyah 25 miles from the capital.

The car bomb in Kirkuk littered the street with bloodied bodies, gutted cars, shards of glass and twisted metal. The police academy's steps were covered in blood. "I saw one of my friends killed before my eyes. I couldn't do anything to help him," said Bassem Ali, a student at the academy who was hurt in the blast. Kirkuk police put the toll at 20 dead and 36 wounded.

"This is a terrorist act against members of Iraqi police who were going home," said Kirkuk police Col. Sarhat Qadir.

Militants have blown up police sta-



Police look at a vehicle damaged by a car bomb which exploded, killing at least 20 and wounded 36 others, in Kirkuk, Iraq, on Saturday. A suicide attacker detonated the car bomb outside a police academy as hundreds of trainees and civilians were leaving for the day.

tions all over the country, gunned down officers in drive-by shootings and butted police recruitment centers with mortar barrages and rocket-propelled grenades — leaving policemen increasingly terrified and deterring would-be recruits.

From April 2003 to May 2004 alone, 710 Iraqi police were killed out of a total force of 130,000, authorities said.

In Tal Afar, a U.S. OH-58D Kiowa helicopter was hit by enemy fire and forced to make an emergency landing, said U.S. Army Capt. Angela Bowman. The aircraft's two crew members were wounded, she said.

A U.S. Stryker Brigade vehicle securing the helicopter's site was later attacked by rocket-propelled grenades, the military said. Troops fought back, killing two attackers.

The attacks came amid fierce resistance to smash a militant cell operating in the town, which U.S. intelligence believed had become a haven for militants crossing the border from Syria. Fawzi Mohammed, the head of the local hospital, said at least eight people died and another 30 were wounded during the clashes.

Many of the casualties were caused by a mortar shell explosion in a Tal Afar market, authorities said.

In Baghdad, mortar rounds landed near a convention center where members of Iraq's 100-member transitional assembly, known as the Iraqi Council, gathered for a meeting. Despite the ex-

plosions, delegates elected four vice chairmen of the National Council, which is intended to act as a watchdog over the interim government of Prime Minister Ayad Allawi until the election.

The Cabinet met Saturday and agreed to allocate more funds to security operations and rebuild areas damaged by fighting. They also decided to build up a strategic food reserve able to supply the country for three months, Allawi's office said in a statement.

Also Saturday, saboteurs blew up an oil pipeline in southern Iraq, part of a campaign of attacks on the country's oil infrastructure aimed at hampering reconstruction efforts.

Firefighters struggled to put out the blaze caused by the explosion near Hartha, 19 miles north of Basra, and technicians were forced to shut down the pipeline, said police Maj. Col. Nouri Mohammed.

In the latest hostage crisis, Iraqi militants threatened to behead a Turkish truck driver if his employers and a Kuwaiti contractor don't leave Iraq within 48 hours, according to a video aired Saturday on the pan-Arab television channel Al-Arabiya.

France's foreign minister, Michel Barnier, returned home from the Middle East without winning the release of two French journalists held hostage since mid-August. But Interior Minister Dominique de Villepin said in Paris that there were signs Christian Chesnot and Georges Malbrunot could be released soon.

4 Navy SEALs face charges of prisoner abuse in Iraq

BY SANDRA JONTZ
Stars and Stripes

ARLINGTON, Va. — Four Navy SEALs face charges and disciplinary action in a case involving prisoner abuse in Iraq, adding to the scandal of detainee abuse plaguing the Defense Department.

The four SEALs were charged Thursday with failure to report mistreatment of detainees to proper authorities, mistreatment of detainees, making false official statements to investigators, assault and aggravated assault, and solicitation to commit an offense, said Cmdr. Jeff Bender, spokesman for the Naval Special Warfare Command in San Diego, Calif.

News of the charges were first made public Friday afternoon. The allegations surfaced when an Iraqi SEAL, who no longer is part of the Navy's special forces and who himself faces unrelated disciplinary action, told officials investigating his case that he witnessed the abuse of detainees between October 2003 and April 2004, Bender said.

Bender could not disclose the nature of the allegations against the one SEAL, but said it has nothing to do with prisoner abuse.

The alleged abuse by the four charged SEALs did not occur at the infamous Abu Ghraib prison in Baghdad, Bender said, which has been the source of much of the abuse scandal surrounding the Army that has led to a series of investigations by high-level defense, congressional and former defense officials.

However, Bender said because the investigation against the four is ongoing, he could not say where in Iraq the alleged abuse happened or provide any details surrounding the allegations.

Nor did he provide any information on the four SEALs, because formal charge sheets against them have yet to be released, Bender said.

Those charge sheets, which should identify the SEALs by name, could be made public as early as this week.

No matter if any disciplinary hearings have been set, Bender said. The hearings are likely to take place in San Diego, where the SEALs are based, he said.

E-mail Sandra Jontz at: jontzs@stripes.osd.mil

U.S. military avoids degrading arrest tactics in Iraq



A U.S. soldier puts his foot on a suspected Iraqi thief in Tikrit, Iraq, in May 2003. The U.S. military is now avoiding once-common arrest techniques like bagging suspects' heads or stepping on detainees' bodies while they're on the ground.

BY JIM KRANE
The Associated Press

BAGHDAD — The U.S. military is avoiding once-common arrest techniques like bagging suspects' heads, the U.S. commander in charge of the Iraqi capital said, because such actions are considered humiliating by Iraqis and pushing new recruits into the insurgency.

"You've got to see it from a force protection standpoint," U.S. Army Maj. Gen. Peter Chiarelli said. "When we mistreat one person, I've got a net increase of nine enemies."

Soldiers are told to avoid hand-cuffing or blindfolding suspects — often done by placing a cloth sack over a suspect's head — in front of their families, said Chiarelli, who commands the Texas-based 1st Cavalry Division, which controls security in Baghdad.

The Army's 1st Infantry Division, which guards a swath of the Sunni Arab homeland north of Baghdad, started a similar "digni-

ty and respect" initiative in April. Its commander, Maj. Gen. John Baste, asked soldiers to be more courteous at traffic checkpoints and to stop putting bags over detainees' heads, division spokesman Maj. Neal O'Brien said.

Especially insulting is the practice of subduing Iraqi men by stepping on them.

"The worst thing in the world is to put him on the ground and put your boot on his head," Chiarelli said Thursday at 1st Cavalry headquarters near Baghdad International Airport. "Honor is so critical in this society. You don't take away a man's honor."

Baghdad residents, asked about the changes, complained about the unpopular U.S. presence in Iraq, from the blocking of roads and bridges to aggressive driving and capricious detentions. Halting humiliating arrest techniques is a positive development, they said, but too little, too late.

"The detainee is not an animal to

put a bag over his head," said Qusai Talha, a 35-year-old laborer interviewed at Tahrir Square in central Baghdad. "Detention should be done politely, until the prisoner is proven guilty — or not. The Americans should have considered this from the start."

The division hired Iraqis to instruct the 32,000 U.S. troops under Chiarelli's command in the cultural traits and taboos of Iraq's 26 million inhabitants. Soldiers are told to separate a man being arrested from his family by asking him to go outside his home and speak to soldiers.

"If you really need to put him in flex cuffs, that's where you do it, not in front of his family," Chiarelli said. About 10 percent of the division's troops "just don't get it," the commander said, but most understand the importance of treating Iraqis with dignity, even those accused of killing Americans or others. If soldiers humiliate a man being arrested in front of his family or neighbors, word spreads and hostility swells.

Steam line work to tie up Yokota traffic

BY VINCE LITTLE
Stars and Stripes

YOKOTA AIR BASE, Japan — Traffic will be a little cramped along Yokota's main drag during the next seven months.

A section of Airlift Avenue, from Friendship Boulevard near Building 314 to the Main Fitness Center, has been reduced to two lanes so workers can replace underground steam lines used for heating and cooling elements in the surrounding facilities. The \$51 million project is expected to be complete in early April.

"It's going to be around with us for a while," said 2nd Lt. Pete Hernandez, 374th Civil Engineer Squadron's Japan Facilities Improvement Program chief. "So far, impact on traffic has been minimal. However, some delays are expected, particularly for drivers who need to park at Building 314 or 316."

Last year, Airlift Avenue was shut down just north of that area for several months as contractors installed a new steam plant. That plant has been on-line for at least two months, said Raymond Kishaba, resident engineer for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Japan District.

Motorists were directed around that construction via Davis Street, which they'll now have to use to access parking lots for Building 314 and 316, said Hernandez. Those buildings sandwich the 374th Airlift Wing's headquarters.

People headed to the Child Development Center behind the main gym, which is also being renovated, must take Davis Street. Workers are placing manholes at the intersection of Airlift Avenue and the access road to the CDC, so it had to be sealed off, Kishaba said.

JIM SCHULZ/Stars and Stripes

Yokota Air Base has reduced traffic to two lanes on Airlift Avenue from the 374th Airlift Wing Headquarters to the main gym due to an upgrade of the base steam pipes under the roads. The work should be completed in April.

Bobzien Ave. repaving at night

YOKOTA AIR BASE, Japan — Base officials are resurfacing Bobzien Avenue on Yokota's west side from Highway 16 gate to Kearby Court, just across the railroad tracks.

"The repaving is being done at night," said John Starnes, a 374th Civil Engineer Squadron construction inspector. "We're trying to keep traffic flowing. It's got to be done in phases because the road has to remain open at all times."

The project requires coordination between Yokota personnel, Fussa City police and local government officials, he added. Most of the work is performed between 8 p.m. and 4 a.m.

Contractors aren't allowed to approach the train tracks that intersect Bobzien Avenue until 10 p.m., when a Japan Railway representative must be present to observe.

The Jones Street extension has been resurfaced from Bobzien Avenue to the Air Mobility Command's temporary passenger terminal, Starnes said.

The repaving of Bobzien Avenue should be finished by the end of November, he added, although it could last into the new year.

Seitokyo Kogyu Company Ltd. has been contracted for all of Yokota's resurfacing projects, which include efforts under way at the base incinerator and Tama Hills Golf Course parking lot.

Collectively, Yokota is spending about \$6 million to \$8 million to improve roads and parking lots, Starnes said.

— Vince Little

The current steam lines are decades old, according to Hernandez.

"They were installed in the 1950s, redone in the 80s and now it's coming up again," he added.

Steam is used in heating elements for many buildings in the winter, Hernandez said. And absorption chillers use steam to cool facilities down in summertime.

All Airlift Avenue buildings will "be affected by the new steam lines," Kishaba added.

The Airlift Avenue replacement is part of a base-wide steam infrastructure upgrade effort, Hernandez said. When complete, Yokota will have core steam-generation plants for the west, east and central areas.

It's a massive project costing hundreds of millions of dollars and covering many years, he said. And the government of Japan pays the tabs.

"The Japanese government helps us to infuse resources into the infrastructure here," Hernandez said. "As far as facilities at Yokota, they make it very easy for us to maintain. That's a nice thing to have."

"Other bases back in the States have problems we don't have here. That reduces the number of maintenance calls we get here at night. Some bases have full-time people to take those calls. We don't have to. Our base runs pretty smoothly. The Japanese government takes such good care of us."

E-mail Vince Little at: littlev@pstripes.osd.mil

U.S.: Tokorozawa fuel spill cleanup going well

BY VINCE LITTLE
Stars and Stripes

YOKOTA AIR BASE, Japan — U.S. Air Force officials, working around-the-clock to clean up last week's fuel spill at the Tokorozawa Communication Site, hope to finish removal of the contaminated soil in about 10 days, according to on-scene commander, Lt. Col. Martin Granum.

On Tuesday, nearly 21,000 gallons of diesel fuel leaked from a supply tank for a backup generator at the 374th Airlift Wing oper-

ated satellite radio installation about 20 miles northeast of Yokota.

"There is no permanent damage to the local community or environment, and the spill is contained at this site," Granum said.

The system that malfunctioned is out of service, he added, and there's no threat of another spill.

Granum said the Air Force has worked closely with Tokyo's Defense Facilities Administration Bureau and Tokorozawa City officials.

A local firm specializing in site

cleanup was granted a \$250,000 contract by Yokota officials Thursday to remove the contaminated soil from Tokorozawa, according to a 374th Airlift Wing news release. The company had removed almost 1,000 cubic yards of soil by Friday evening.

"We anticipate this removal effort will continue into the middle of September, with overall completion of backfill and seeding by Sept. 24," Granum said.

"I'm satisfied with our overall progress," Granum said. "The disaster-control group and team at

Yokota continue to work hard to ensure everything is being done as quickly as possible. We've had a great response from our med group, bioenvironmental engineers, contracting squadron, fire department and readiness people."

"Restoration began quickly and the spill was contained the day it happened," he said.

An investigation continues into the incident.

The Tokorozawa facility is a small radio site run by 374th Communications Squadron personnel. About 10 people work at the location.

E-mail Vince Little at: littlev@pstripes.osd.mil



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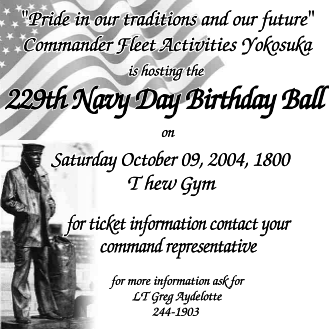
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U.S. official says 'clock ticking' for bin Laden

BY MATTHEW PENNINGTON
The Associated Press

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan — The United States and its allies have moved closer to capturing Osama bin Laden in the last two months, a top U.S. counterterrorism official said in a television interview aired Saturday.

"If he has a watch, he should be looking at it because the clock is ticking. He will be caught," Joseph Cofer Black, the U.S. State Department coordinator for counterterrorism, told private Goe television network.

Asked if concrete progress had been made during the last two

months — when Pakistan has arrested dozens of terror suspects including some key al-Qaida operatives — Black said, "Yes, I would say this."

Black, who briefed a group of Pakistani journalists after talks with officials here Friday, said he could not predict exactly when bin Laden and other top al-Qaida fugitives would be nabbed.

"What I tell people, I would be surprised but not necessarily shocked if we wake up tomorrow and he's been caught along with all his lieutenants. That can happen because of the programs and infrastructure in place," he told Goe.

Bin Laden and his top associate

Ayman al-Zawahiri are believed to be hiding some place along the long and rugged border between Pakistan and Afghanistan. Officials have divulged no solid intelligence on their exact whereabouts, and it's not clear if they have any.

Pakistan is a key ally of the United States in its war on terror, and Black's visit comes weeks after Pakistani security forces captured Ahmed Khalfan Ghailani, a Tanzanian wanted for the 1998 U.S. embassy bombings in east Africa, and Mohammed Naem Noor Khan, a Pakistani computer expert allegedly linked to al-Qaida operatives around the world.

The arrests led to a terror warn-

ing in the United States, and arrests in Britain and the United Arab Emirates.

Black attended a meeting of the Pakistan-U.S. Joint Working Group on Counterterrorism and Law Enforcement in Islamabad on Thursday and Friday.

During the talks, Pakistan asked U.S. officials for more helicopters, surveillance and communications equipment to help Pakistani forces guard border areas near Afghanistan "more efficiently," a Pakistani official at the talks said.

"We got a positive response from the American officials," said the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

Pakistan has deployed about 70,000 troops along the Afghan border and conducted several military operations this year in its lawless tribal regions against al-Qaida suspects and their local supporters.

Black hailed Pakistan's efforts in counterterrorism — despite criticism from Western officials who say that elements of the former ruling Taliban regime in Afghanistan still operate inside Pakistan.

"In terms of national programs and effectiveness, I would put Pakistan up against anyone else. ... If you look at the arrest they have made, the information they have developed and the lives that have been saved, Pakistan is doing a great job," he said.



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Death toll of Russian school siege climbs to more than 340, including 156 kids

By MIKE ECKEL
The Associated Press

BESLAN, Russia — Anguished parents searched handwritten hospital lists Saturday as the death toll rose above 340 amid conflicting accounts of how the three-day seizure of a Russian school erupted into its bloody denouement.

President Vladimir Putin warned the nation in a solemn televised address that international terrorists had declared "a full-scale war" against Russia and that due to the collapse of the Soviet Union, the nation was weakened and unable to respond effectively as it must.

He called for Russians to mobilize against what he said was the "common danger" of terrorism. Measures would be taken, Putin promised, to strengthen Russia's unity and overhaul the law enforcement organs, which he acknowledged had been infected by corruption.

"What happened was a terrorist act that was inhuman and unprecedented in its cruelty," Putin told the nation. "It is a challenge not to the president, the parliament and the government but a challenge to all of Russia, to all of our people. It is an attack on our nation."

Regional Emergency Situations Minister Boris Drogovoy said 323 victims, including 156 children, had been killed in School No. 1 in Beslan, an industrial city in the southern Russian region of North Ossetia. More than 542 people including 336 children were hospitalized after the crisis ended in a rash of explosions and a crossfire of bullets, medical officials said.

The figures were staggering because Russian officials had initially said that there were only 350 hostages — a number that turned out to be at least three times lower than now believed.

Drogovoy said that 35 attackers — heavily-armed, and explosive-laden men and women — had been eliminated after the 10-hour gun and explosives battle in the school erupted shortly after 1 p.m. Friday.

Many questions remain unanswered, including who the militants were and what they wanted, though officials linked the attack to Russia's bloody war in neighboring Chechnya, as well as to international terrorist groups, amid reports that there were at least nine Arabs among the hostage-takers.

Putin made a lightning-quick dawn visit to the grieving city, as smoke was still rising from the shattered school. His visit did little, however, to ease the grief and anger in this Russian Orthodox region set amid the predominantly Muslim North Caucasus.

Russian authorities said the bloody end to the standoff came Friday after explosions were apparently set off by the militants — possibly by accident — as emergency workers entered the school courtyard to collect the bodies of slain hostages.



Ossetians read lists of those hostages who escaped from a seized school outside Beslan's hospital Saturday in Northern Ossetia. Fear has given way to grief, anger and desperation for loved ones of hundreds of children and adults who were taken hostage at School No. 1 on Wednesday morning by a group of heavily armed militants. Commandos stormed a school Friday and battled militants holding hundreds of hostages as crying children fled the building through explosions and gunfire.

Arab media decries 'our terrorist sons'

By MAGGIE MICHAEL
The Associated Press

CAIRO, Egypt — Muslims worldwide are the main perpetrators of terrorism, a humiliating and painful truth that must be acknowledged, a prominent Arab writer and television executive wrote Saturday, as Middle East media and officials expressed horror at the bloody rebel siege of a Russian school.

Unusually forthright self-criticism followed the end of the hostage crisis, along with warnings that such actions inflict more damage to the image of Islam than all its enemies could hope. Arab leaders and Muslim clerics denounced the school seizure as unjustifiable and expressed their sympathy.

Images of terrified young survivors being carried from the scene aired repeatedly on Arab TV stations. Pictures of dead and wounded children ran on front pages of Arab newspapers Saturday.

"Holy warriors" from the Middle East long have supported fellow Muslims fighting in Chechnya, and Russian officials said nine or 10 Arabs were among militants killed.

"Our terrorist sons are an end-product of our corrupted culture," Abdulrahman al-Rashed, general manager of Al-Arabiya television wrote in his daily column published in the pan-Arab Ashraq Al-Awsat newspaper. It ran under the headline, "The Painful Truth: All the World Terrorists are Muslims!"

Al-Rashed ran through a list of recent attacks by Islamic extremist groups — in Russia, Iraq, Sudan, Saudi Arabia and Yemen — many of which are influenced by the ideology of Osama bin Laden, the Saudi-born leader of the al-Qaida terrorist network.

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IN THE STATES

Edge of storm whipping Fla.

BY ALLEN G. BREED
The Associated Press

FORT PIERCE, Florida — Potent but slow-moving Hurricane Frances snapped power lines and whipped the Atlantic coast with winds over 90 mph Saturday, knocking out electricity for about two million people and forcing Floridians to endure another day of waiting and worrying.

The wind uprooted trees and peeled off roofs; coastal waters resembled a churning hot tub. "Those folks are getting pounded, and they've got worse to come," said Max Mayfield, director of the National Hurricane Center.

Frances crowded toward Florida at just 5 mph before stalling over warm water, more than a day later than predicted. The storm's eye wasn't expected to hit east-central Florida until early Sunday.

Frances shattered windows, toppled power lines and flooded neighborhoods in the Bahamas, driving thousands from their homes. The Freeport airport was partially submerged in water.

Frances' arrival came three weeks after Hurricane Charley killed 27 people and caused billions of dollars in damage in southwestern Florida.

For some Floridians, the second storm couldn't arrive soon enough.

"I just want it to be quick. Just get it over with," said Woodline Jadis, 20, tired of waiting at a shelter in Orlando.

The storm's leading edge pounded the Florida coast early Saturday, and about 300 miles of coastline remained under a hurricane warning. Frances was so big that virtually the entire state feared damage from wind and water. Forecasters said the storm would dump 8 to 12 inches of rain, with up to 20 inches in some areas.

"This is the time to show some resolve and not be impatient," Gov. Jeb Bush said. "This is a dangerous, dangerous storm."

The largest evacuation in state history, with 2.8 million residents ordered inland, sent 70,000 residents and tourists into shelters. The storm shut down much of Flor-



Hurricane Frances batters boats Saturday in the marina at Palm Beach Shores, Fla.

ida, including airports and amusement parks, at the start of the usually busy Labor Day weekend.

Frustrated by Frances' sluggish pace, Deborah Nicholas dashed home from a Fort Pierce shelter to take a shower, but stayed only a few minutes when the lights started flickering and trees began popping out of the ground. She has slept in a deck chair at a high school cafeteria since Wednesday.

"I'm going to be in a strait-jacket by Monday."

Residents could take comfort that Frances weakened as it lingered off the coast. Forecasters

downgraded it to a Category 2 hurricane as sustained winds receded to 105 mph, down from 145 earlier. But the heavy rain forecast still threatened to cause widespread flooding.

Wind gusts reached 91 mph at Jupiter Inlet north of West Palm Beach. Florida Power & Light pulled crews off the streets because of heavy wind, meaning those without power would have to wait until the storm subsided, utility spokesman Bill Swank said.

Frances was expected to push across the state as a tropical storm just north of Tampa, weaken to a tropical depression and drench the Panhandle on Monday before moving into Alabama.

Braving hurricane with reptile friends

BY SARAH MYRICK
Scripps Howard News Service

PORT ST. LUCIE, Fla. — While most people took refuge with family members or fled Hurricane Frances, Raymond Gonslaw and Kristina Turk rode out the storm in Fort Pierce with 400 reptiles.

Gonslaw, president of the St. Lucie Regional Herpetological Society, owns a reptile breeding and rescue operation.

But, what's a reptile breeder with an assortment of alligators, poisonous snakes and 100-pound gopher tortoises to do when a hurricane threatens the area?

And, that's not to mention the 1,000 mice and rats needed to feed the animals.

Gonslaw, 40, and his fiancée, Turk, along with a few volunteers, will move the animals from an 81-acre site in Fort Pierce — bagging up poisonous snakes and storing alligators in large five-gallon totes.

The snakes and larger reptiles will be fed before they are stored and can survive on water for about two weeks, Gonslaw said.

But, the frogs, bearded dragons, and iguanas will likely feast on salads and fruits.

With two dogs, two cats — in addition to the reptiles — Gonslaw and Turk are more worried about their home's being damaged by the animals than by Hurricane Frances.

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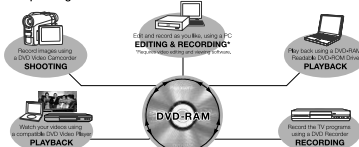
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Medicare premiums get record rise for '05

BY MARK SHERMAN
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Medicare premiums for doctor visits are going up a record \$11.60 a month next year. The Bush administration says the increase reflects a strengthened Medicare, while Democrats complain that seniors are being unfairly socked.

Monthly payments for Part B of the government health-care program for older and disabled Americans — doctor visits and most other non-hospital expenses — will jump to \$78.20 from \$66.60, a 17 percent increase, the administration said Friday.

The administration, seeking political advantage among older voters, has tried to depict the Medicare law, with its first-ever prescription drug benefit, as a boon to seniors.

"The new premiums reflect an enhanced Medicare that is providing seniors and people with disabilities with strengthened access to physician services and new preventive benefits," said Dr. Mark McClellan, administrator of the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services.

The increase reflects rapidly rising health costs and last year's Medicare overhaul, McClellan

said. For example, the law has reduced planned 4.5 percent cut in Medicare payments to physicians and replaced it with a 1.5 percent increase.

But Democrats and other critics have decried the law as a giveaway to insurers, drug makers and medical providers.

"George Bush is presiding over a Medicare system that is socking seniors with the largest premium hike in the program's 40-year history," said Phil Singer, spokesman for Democrat John Kerry's presidential campaign.

The timing of the release — the day after the Republican conven-

tion, just before the Labor Day weekend and with a hurricane bearing down on Florida and its nearly 3 million Medicare recipients — also drew criticism Friday.

"This is a cynical attempt to bury bad news by leaking it out when you hope no one is watching," said Rep. Fortney (R-Ind.). "Stark, D-Calif." "This administration has had four years to improve Medicare and instead have made it worse. Today's news reflects the reality, not rhetoric, of this administration's bad record on Medicare."

McClellan denied any effort to

coordinate the release with even. "We're getting these numbers out as soon as we can," he said.

The premiums are updated annually under a formula set by law.

The federal government picks up about 75 percent of the cost of Part B benefits and beneficiaries pay the rest.

Premiums have been increasing at an accelerating pace in recent years, rising 13.5 percent in 2003 and 8.7 percent last year.

In addition, the deductible for Part B services will rise \$10 next year, to \$110, another change mandated by the Medicare law.

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Clinton in good spirits as he awaits heart surge

BY FRANK ELTMAN
The Associated Press

NEW YORK — As he prepared for heart bypass surgery early next week, Bill Clinton was in good spirits, dressed in sweat clothes and walking around his hospital room Saturday morning, people close to the Clinton family said.

The former president said he was "a little scared, but not much" of the surgery, but was looking forward to a swift recovery and resuming normal activities such as jogging.

He was hospitalized Friday with chest pains and shortness of breath. The upcoming operation could limit his role in campaigning for fellow Democrat John Kerry, who is making a run for

the White House.

"I let me just say this, Republicans aren't the only people who want four more years here," Clinton said in a live interview Friday evening on CNN's "Larry King Live."

An angiogram showed that Clinton, who turned 58 two weeks ago, had significant blockage in his heart arteries but did not suffer a heart attack, a doctor who performed the test told The Associated Press.



Clinton

Clinton blamed the blockage in part on genetics but also said he "may have done some damage in those years when I was too careless about what I ate."

"I guess I'm a little scared, but not much," he said. "I'm looking forward to it. I want to get back. I want to see what it's like to run five miles again."

His wife, Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton, said the former president would have surgery early next week and no further information about his condition would be released until the operation is finished.

"I wanted to report to you that my husband is doing very well," she said outside New York Presbyterian Hospital/Columbia, where the former president is being treated. "He's in great humor. He's beating all of us at cards and the rest of the games we're playing."

In bypass surgery, a new piece of blood vessel, usually taken from the patient's leg, is sewn into place to create a detour around a blockage. Patients typically spend three to five days in the hospital and are encouraged to be fairly active right away.

Clinton had agreed to campaign for Kerry in the two months before the Nov. 2 general election and had already appeared at some Democratic Party events.

Both President Bush and Kerry, the junior senator from Massachusetts, sent best wishes to Clinton.

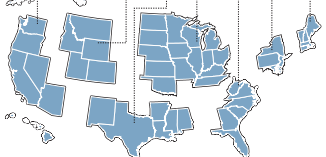
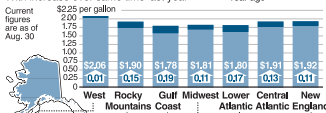
Vice President Dick Cheney, who has had four heart attacks, called Clinton from Las Vegas and wished him well. Anne Wornack, Cheney's spokeswoman, said the former president "sounded good."

High gas prices hamper holiday road trips

Across the country, gasoline prices are higher this Labor Day weekend than last year. The recent surge in the price of crude oil is one reason.

Average price of regular gasoline

With current prices over same time last year



Motorists resigned to high fuel prices

The Associated Press

ORANGE, Va. — Pointing to the Dodge Durango sport utility vehicle she uses even for short trips, bed-and-breakfast owner Patricia North puckered her lips and mimicked the sound of water going down a drain.

"The price of gasoline annoys me," said North, 43, who was leaving the post office in Orange, a picturesque town of 4,100 about 70 miles southwest of the nation's capital. "But does it stop me from doing stuff? No."

North is not alone, as Americans appear to be getting used to paying more to drive — even if it means they have less money to buy other things. Wal-Mart Stores Inc., the world's largest retailer, blamed disappointing August sales on shoppers spending more just getting to and from stores.

So while motorists began the

summer with indignation as gasoline prices rose above \$2 a gallon in much of the country, many are ending it with an equal dose of resignation, as pump prices and demand remain higher than last year.

The average price of unleaded regular gasoline nationwide is \$1.87 a gallon, according to the Energy Department. While that's down 8 percent from the late-May peak of \$2.03, it's still 12 cents more expensive than a year ago.

At the same time, the amount of gasoline Americans use each day is increasing, according to government data, though the rise in consumption is not as strong as it was at the start of the summer, suggesting higher prices have curbed driving somewhat. Still, AAA estimates there will be about 28.7 million travelers on the road this Labor Day holiday weekend, a 2 percent jump from last year.

Court to address gay parent rights

CHARLESTON, W.Va. — The West Virginia Supreme Court has agreed to decide whether state law recognizes the parental rights of same-sex partners.

Tina Burch is appealing for custody of the 4-year-old son of her lesbian partner, Christina D. Smarr, who died in a 2002 car accident. Within hours of Smarr's death, Smarr's brothers-in-law

took the child from Burch and handed him over to his grandparents.

A lower court ruled in December that state law does not give a homosexual the right to win legal guardianship of a former partner's child, Burch appealed. On Thursday, the state high court agreed to hear the case, and voted 3-2 to grant Burch temporary custody.

The Burch is arguing state law allows for custody to be awarded to a child's psychological parent.

From The Associated Press

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FACES 'N' PLACES

Another 'Top Model'

"America's Next Top Model" is heading back to the runway. The UPN reality show has announced the cast for its third season of super-model boot camp.

The new season debuts Sept. 22.

Under the mentoring of Tyra Banks, 14 aspiring models will compete in tests of catwalks, fitness and publicizing skills. The contests, according to the show's Web site, will be judged for "both inner and outer beauty."

The models' poise likely will be tested while they live together in a New York City loft under constant surveillance from the show's cameras.



Banks

'Collateral' celebrated

Tom Cruise was playing cold and heartless in Italy at the Venice International Film Festival in his hit-movie role as Vincent, the devil in a gray tattered suit, in

Michael Mann's action-thriller "Collateral." But "Collateral," which isn't in competition for an award, got a warm greeting Friday at the 61st festival, being held on the small Lido island off central Venice. The festival ends Sept. 11 with an awards ceremony hosted by Sophia Loren.

Cruise plays against type as a psychopathic murderer, while Jamie Foxx is a hapless but good-hearted taxi driver.



Cruise

'Weird' insect attack

Things got hairy for parody singer "Weird Al" Yankovic as a flock of unwanted fans rushed onstage during his performance at a state fair in southern Illinois.

Green moths swarmed Yankovic, some nesting in his trademark long curly locks.

"My band asked me if I could find a concert where we would be attacked by insects," Yankovic told his audience Wednesday at the Du Quoin State Fair. "I said I would see what I could do."

Yankovic didn't seem bugged by the unwitting guests, though, as he plugged along with songs and costume changes during his self-described "rock and comedy multimedia extravaganza" to support his recent album, "Poodle Hat."



Yankovich



Gary Levox, left, Joe Don Rooney, center, and Jay DeMarcus of the group Rascal Flatts, accept the award for top vocal group at the 39th annual Academy of Country Music Awards on May 26. These cowboys have hit mainstream radio with a bang after their debut album in 2000.

Suburban cowboys enjoy their country run

BY JOHN HAYES
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

Hard-core traditionalists, stop whining. In the big, inclusive tent of country music, Rascal Flatts is country simply because it says it is. Mainstream radio disciples, you stop whining, too. There's tons of great country music beyond your little frequencies.

Suburban cowboys Gary Levox, Jay DeMarcus and Joe Don Rooney are sick and tired of being bombarded by the argument, too. They've been hearing it since the Disney corporation's Hollywood Records issued the vocal group's slippery-when-wet debut in 2000. The bubbly drive-time melodies and poppy Mutt Lange-style vocal harmonies sung by cute young heartthrobs slid snugly

into a mainstream radio groove cut to catch young and youngish women.

It caught them, all right. Rascal Flatts spawned four Top 10 singles and became one of only three platinum debuts by recording artists in the past five years. "Melt," the album's 2002 successor, passed platinum in five weeks and has so far Sound Scanned twice that amount in sales. It, too, produced four played-to-death singles. Last year, Rascal Flatts was named Vocal Group of the Year by the Country Music Association, Academy of Country Music and publisher ASCAP.

Somewhere between a whirlwind of road trips, the group and their producers found time to screen some 3,000 songs in search of new material. Plus, individual members and their co-writers came up with a fresh batch of

originals, four of which made the cut and landed on the new CD.

Levox promises that the album, "Feels Like Today," is lush with snappy snares and overlapping overwhelmingly poppy vocal harmonies. It hits the record bins on Sept. 28.

"I think on the production side of things, we got to pick out the drum sounds that we really like," he says. "Vocally, we are what we are, but on this record we spent a lot of time getting it just right. We have so many influences — bluegrass, gospel, we all grew up on country music, Willie, Merle, Waylon, Hank... But (we) just sing it the way it feels. We don't try to sound traditional or like pop singers. We did some new things vocally this time: harmonies that are different, all of us singing the same lines of choruses and then breaking out with the country melody stuff."

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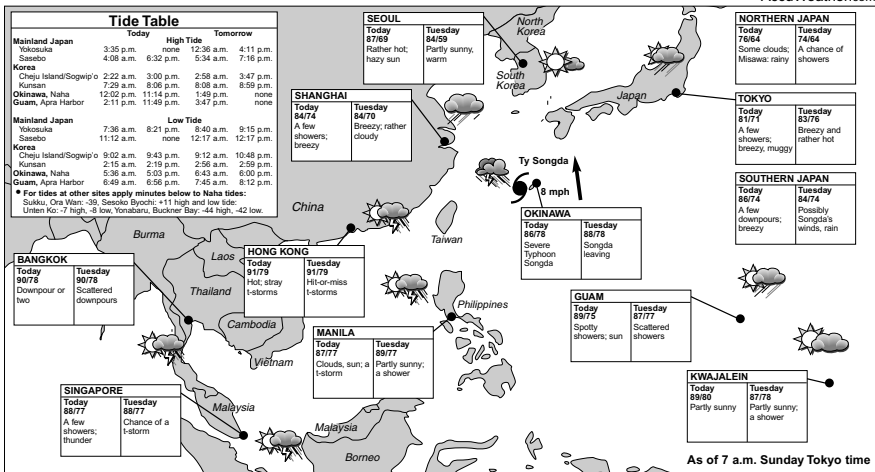
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Afternoon 1:30-2:00 Movie (1995): Hard Justice (2000) (12) 5:50 News (6) 7:00 News (1) 10:20 CNN News 12:50 MLB Highlights (6)									

The Pacific Forecast

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Extended Forecasts

TOKYO

Wednesday: Periods of clouds and sunshine, high 91, low 78.
 Thursday: Periods of clouds and sunshine, high 83, low 69.

KADENA

Wednesday: Showers, high 84, low 76.
 Thursday: Showers, high 84, low 76.

SEOUL

Wednesday: Periods of clouds and sunshine, high 79, low 58.
 Thursday: Periods of clouds and sunshine, high 69, low 55.

MANILA

Wednesday: Showers, high 87, low 77.
 Thursday: Periods of clouds and sunshine, high 89, low 77.

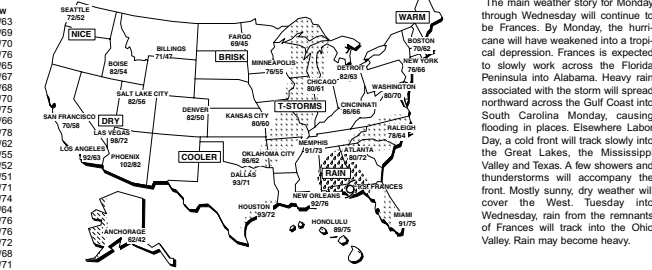
HAGATNA

Wednesday: Showers, high 89, low 77.
 Thursday: Showers, high 89, low 77.

Saturday's USA Temperatures

CITY	HIGH/LOW	CITY	HIGH/LOW
Albuquerque	78/63	Los Angeles	86/63
Amarillo	85/62	Little Rock	88/69
Anchorage	57/41	Louisville	87/70
Ashville	52/60	Miami	88/76
Baltimore	87/66	Milwaukee	80/65
Birmingham	87/69	Nashville	87/67
Bismarck	68/50	New York	86/68
Boise	76/49	Omaha	92/70
Boston	83/60	Orlando	89/75
Brownsville	93/76	Philadelphia	87/66
Buffalo	53/64	Phoenix	94/78
Burlington	77/52	Pittsburgh	82/62
Charleston, SC	86/74	Portland, OR	69/55
Charlotte	85/67	Portland, ME	81/52
Cleveland	52/65	Salt Lake City	65/51
Columbus, OH	83/65	St. Louis	87/71
Duluth	82/61	San Antonio	87/74
El Paso	88/65	San Diego	80/64
Cincinnati	86/59	San Juan	93/76
Helena	71/46	Tampa	92/76
Indianapolis	86/67	Tulsa	93/72
Jacksonville	86/77	Washington	87/68
Kansas City	90/69	Wichita	92/71

Monday, September 06



U.S. Extended Forecast

The main weather story for Monday through Wednesday will continue to be Frances. By Monday, the hurricane will have weakened into a tropical depression. Frances is expected to slowly work across the Florida Peninsula into Alabama. Heavy rain associated with the storm will spread northward across the Gulf Coast into South Carolina Monday, causing flooding in places. Elsewhere Labor Day, a cold front will track slowly into the Great Lakes, the Mississippi Valley and Texas. A few showers and thunderstorms will accompany the front. Mostly sunny, dry weather will cover the West. Tuesday into Wednesday, rain from the remnants of Frances will track into the Ohio Valley. Rain may become heavy.

Monday's Pacific Temperatures

CITY	HIGH/LOW	CITY	HIGH/LOW
Bangkok	90/78	Iwakuni	81/72
Beijing	81/65	Kadena AB	86/78
Camp Casey	87/67	Kansan AB	88/70
Chattanooga	49/35	Kawajalein	89/80
Diego Garcia	83/75	Manila	87/77
Hagatna	89/75	Masawa AB	73/65
Hanoi	94/81	Osan	88/68
Hong Kong	91/79	Pearl Harbor	88/70
Honolulu	89/75	Pusan	78/66

Monday's World Temperatures

CITY	HIGH/LOW	CITY	HIGH/LOW	CITY	HIGH/LOW
Acapulco	92/73	Budapest	77/56	Kabul	97/61
Athens	72/54	Buenos Aires	70/52	Kiev	66/51
Auckland	55/42	Cairo	94/66	Kuwait	113/80
Baghdad	108/72	Cancun	91/75	London	76/60
Barbados	90/74	Cape Town	91/45	Madrid	86/62
Barcelona	71/57	Geneva	76/60	Mexico City	73/55
Berlin	77/61	Hamburg	66/49	Moscow	75/61
Bermuda	83/71	Jerusalem	86/61	Mogadishu	88/73
Brussels	81/60	Johannesburg	66/48	Warsaw	74/56



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Woman, soldier, patriot

In response to "Sending women to war wrong" (Aug. 15): I am not only a woman and a veteran, but also a patriot. I served in the Middle East during Desert Shield/Desert Storm, dealing with the same issues and problems as the male soldiers, plus a few extras.

I believe strongly in the ideas of freedom and equal opportunity for all that our nation is built upon. To say that I, while being intelligent, courageous, hard-working, loyal and patriotic, should not be allowed to defend those rights the same as my male counterparts, is to deny me one of the liberties we all hold dear. It may as well be said women should not be police officers or firefighters because they face the same danger as men there, too.

I knew that the possibility of war was part of being a soldier when I signed the contract that sent me through training to try and win the Gulf. The training alone, between learning how to fire a weapon effectively to treating a sucking chest wound, is enough to teach anyone that the military is not a game.

America has a proud history as a nation of people who believe in their country and are willing to die for the ideals it is founded on. Why should gender be the basis for denying the right to serve in return for the opportunities and privileges that all are afforded?

David McCarthy

Al United Air Base, Qatar

Women choose to serve

I am a female soldier serving overseas in a combat zone. I think that it is preposterous to say our nation deliberately places female soldiers in harm's way, as the

Tell us what you think

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letter "Sending women to war wrong" (Aug. 15) claims. When soldiers enlist in the military, they choose which job they would like to pursue. I am in a transportation company, which drives throughout Iraq doing the job that I chose to do. Men and women serve side by side, doing the same job, facing the same danger. After all, I do not believe that my life is more valuable than those of the male soldiers who I serve beside.

While the writer states, "America's women are intelligent," he also says that women are encouraged to enlist in the military, having no idea what they are getting into. I would think that any intelligent woman would understand that if she enlists in the military there is a chance

that she may have to serve her country. After all, the definition of "army" is a large organized body of armed personnel trained for war.

The writer should also be aware that it is not "only in America" that women serve in combat zones. There are currently female soldiers in Iraq from numerous countries, including Britain, Italy, Yugoslavia and Poland. Welcome to the 21st century, where gender equality exists.

Spec. Amy Molden
Camp Navistar, Kuwait

Embrace modern standards

This is a response to "Sending women to war wrong" (Aug. 15). Female servicemembers have served honorably in the military since the Civil War. Granted they were not on the battlefield in those days but still they performed some type of service. Females have now fought for equal opportunity to serve their country, and gotten it. This is a new generation with different standards. These women did not enlist with the wool pulled over their eyes.

The government did not deliberately send them into harm's way. They volunteered. While no one wants to hear about a servicemember being killed in action during wartime, it happens. This is a new type of warfare, and there are no front lines. Anywhere the enemy decides to attack is where the fight will take place, if women are there or not. All soldiers know this so, contrary to the letter, the women of our country know what they are getting into. These places are not country clubs, they are war zones where death has no mercy and can come for anyone at any time.

Spic. Daniel Twente
Balad, Iraq

Why my check luggage for bombs?

The Philadelphia Inquirer

he suspected sabotage of two commercial airliners in Russia late last month highlights the urgency of a letter-noticed recommendation on Page 393 of the 9/11 Commission Report—to screen airline passengers for explosives.

The report urged Congress and the federal Transportation Security Administration to give "priority attention" to improving airport screening to detect bombs on passengers' bodies. U.S. airports do extensive baggage searches for explosives, but they can check selected passengers with a bomb-detecting "wand" (or ask you to remove your shoes). But the vast majority of airline passengers are not searched for bombs.

That needs to change. The 9/11 Commission cited our failure to imagine the threat from terrorists, and the crashes in Russia could serve as a reminder of that lesson.

The leading theory of investigators in Russia is that female Islamist suicide attackers, carrying a high explosive known as hexogen, boarded two jetliners and detonated their bombs after take-off from Moscow. All 90 people aboard the two aircraft were killed when the planes crashed minutes apart.

Most airports in the United States do not yet have the advanced screening equipment to stop someone who is carrying a bomb the size of a bar of soap from getting on a plane. But the TSA is moving in the right direction under Homeland Security Director Tom Ridge.

At five airports, the TSA is testing walk-through machines, which can detect if a passenger is carrying explosives. The devices electronically "sniff" the molecules coming off a passenger's body; the process takes about 10 seconds per person. The sensors have been used for years at nuclear power plants.

House Aviation subcommittee Chairman John Mica, R-Fla., has said he wants these machines in every airport in the country. Congress and the Homeland Security Department should move forward with such a plan at the earliest opportunity.

A TSA official says the agency plans to expand the program soon to airports in 10 more cities.

The machines cost about \$140,000 per unit and, equipping U.S. airports on a large scale will cost, at minimum, tens of millions of dollars. Compared with start-up expenses at the TSA, and compared with the cost of the war in Iraq, that investment is relatively small. But considering other improvements in airline security since Sept. 11, 2001, screening passengers for explosives remains one of the most glaring gaps in protecting the nation's airways from another catastrophe.

BY GARRY TRUDEAU

Doonesbury Flashbacks



OPINION

On Labor Day, workers only earn a day off

BY MARK WEISBROT

Labor Day 2004 is anything but a picnic for the vast majority of America's 147-million-member labor force. No matter how you slice it, most U.S. workers are worse off than they were at this time last year.

The average real wage—that is, adjusted for inflation—has actually fallen over the past year. This is in spite of the fact that the economy has grown by 4.7 percent. In other words, even when the economy is growing, most of the people who make it grow aren't getting anything out of it.

This continues a long-term trend—briefly interrupted in the late 1990s—that has dominated the last 30 years. Over the last three decades the median real wage has grown by only about 8 percent. In other words, the majority of the American labor force has failed to share in the gains from economic growth.

This by itself is an outrage and ought to be a major political issue in an election year. Prior to the "Age of Greed" it was normal for the wages of most workers to grow with productivity. If that had happened over the past three decades, the typical (median) family income would be more than \$60,000, instead of the \$43,300 that it is today.

This is not a utopian "what if" scenario but rather what actually has actually occurred if most American workers had not lost so much bargaining power.

Most of this loss stems from policy change-

es rather than just "market forces." For example, the decline in union membership and strength results from legal and institutional changes that have made it extremely difficult for workers to organize unions and bargain collectively.

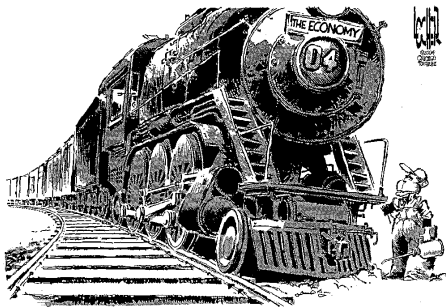
Tens of thousands of workers are illegally fired each year for organizing or attempting to join a union, and companies can refuse to bargain with unions for years even when they are legally obligated to do so. Human Rights Watch found that the United States had a "culture of near impunity" for employers who violate basic labor rights.

Our trade and commercial agreements with other countries have also been deliberately designed to drive down the wages of most workers, while protectionism for professionals—doctors and lawyers, for example—remains intact. It is no wonder that most of the massive redistribution of income of recent decades has gone from the bottom half of the labor force to professional and other highly paid employees.

To reverse these trends, we will need real labor law reform that restores collective bargaining rights for American labor. But it will still be difficult to make up for 30 years of losses.

So labor's best hope for the foreseeable future is probably going to be found in universal programs, such as health care, where employers are currently losing ground as employers cut back on benefits and increase employee co-payments.

Most European workers not only have universal health insurance, but four or five



weeks of vacation a year, paid family leave and often subsidized child care as well. Their societies are no richer than ours, yet they have different priorities.

In the case of health care, our costs are so out of control—we spend nearly twice as much per person as other developed countries and still leave a sixth of our population uninsured—that reform will be increasingly difficult to avoid.

But universal reforms that allow workers

to share in the prosperity that their labor creates also have the advantage—like Social Security and Medicare—of a broad political appeal that makes them easier to win and preserve.

If we can make some progress in these areas by next year's Labor Day, then maybe American labor will have something to celebrate.

Mark Weisbrot is Co-Director of the Center for Economic and Policy Research, a nonpartisan Washington-based think tank.

Real wages have improved with nation's economy

BY MARK J. PERRY

AS we celebrate their economic achievements on Labor Day, American workers can be proud that they are the most productive in the world. Workers can also be thankful that there is overwhelming evidence that the labor market has improved significantly since last Labor Day, and likely will continue to improve.

Measured by output per person, no country in the world even comes close to matching the productivity of American workers—they will produce 30 percent of global output this year with only 5 percent of the world's labor force.

Japanese workers are only 74 percent as productive as American workers, and European workers are only 84 percent as productive.

The world-class productivity of American workers also means they have the highest wages, the most stable employment, and the highest standard of living in the world. Because their productivity is so much lower, the income and standard of living of an average European worker is about on par with workers in America's poorest state, Mississippi.

Europeans are also twice as likely to be unemployed as our workers.

And economic conditions keep getting better for the U.S. work force.

The national unemployment rate of 5.4 percent in August was the lowest in 34 months, far below the 6.25 percent average since 1970, and a significant improvement from 6.2 percent in July 2003.

Since Labor Day 2003, the unemployment rate has declined in all but one state, and the employment picture is so strong that three states set record-low jobless rates this year.

Unemployed workers are also finding it easier to find jobs this year—the median number of weeks unemployed is the lowest since 2001, and is two weeks shorter than

last year. The number of discouraged workers as a percentage of the labor force is lower now than during the corresponding period of the last economic expansion.

We have had 34 consecutive quarters of

growth in real wages for American workers, the longest string of real-wage increases since the 1960s. Real wages for U.S. workers increased by 5 percent since 2001 and are currently increasing at the highest rate in three years.

The improvements in the labor market have been largely responsible for a huge surge in consumer confidence since last Labor Day.

Consumer confidence has increased in eight out of the last 12 months, and hit a

two-year high in July—a stunning improvement of 30 points since July 2003, the largest year-over gain since 1996.

The strong labor market conditions and surging confidence have sent American workers on the biggest spending spree in American history—consumers spent more on retail sales in July than in any single other month in U.S. history. Retail sales since last Labor Day are up by 7 percent, the fastest pace in four years.

Record-low interest rates and the improving economy also boosted both home sales and the homeownership rate to all-time record highs in 2004.

Fortunately, the biggest gains in homeownership recently have been by minority

households, households under 35 years, and households with income less than the median. Homeownership has never been more affordable for the average working household than today.

Workers in the United States can celebrate Labor Day this year with pride as the most productive and highest paid workers in the world. In the international competition for labor productivity, American workers take all of the gold medals.

Workers can also be thankful that the "jobless recovery" of 2002 and 2003 has now turned into a full and robust economic expansion that promises to keep getting better in the future.

Improvements for workers since last Labor Day have been so positive that, for the first time in the current economic expansion that officially started in November 2001, we can confidently say that the labor market has finally made its long-awaited comeback.

Mark J. Perry is an economist at the University of Michigan-Flint and an adjunct scholar with the Macdonald Center for Public Policy, a research and educational institute in Westland, Mich.

We have had 34 consecutive quarters of growth in real wages for American workers, the longest string of real-wage increases since the 1960s.

Mallard Fillmore

BY BRUCE TINSLEY



Funny money

PA GREENSBURG — A store clerk at a woman's clothing store was fooled by a fake \$200 bill, despite several dead giveaways on the currency including President Bush's picture and the serial number DUB9A4U2001.

Police charged Deborah Pruitwine, 51, with theft by deception for allegedly passing the bogus bill at the Fashion Bug store on Aug. 22.

There is no such denomination, with or without Bush's picture.

In addition to Bush's picture, the bill didn't bear the signature of the secretary of the treasury. Instead, it was "signed" by Ronald Reagan, whose title was "Political Mentor" and by Bush's father, who is listed as "Campaign Advisor and Mentor."

The back of the bill was even goofier.

It depicted the White House with several signs erected on the lawn, including those reading "We Like Briscoe!" and "USA Deserves A Tax Cut."

Out of control truck

TN MEMPHIS — An 18-wheel truck crashed into a hamburger stand, killing a woman and injuring at least four other people, authorities said.

The crash occurred after the driver parked the truck in a lot on a hill above the Rally's Hamburgers restaurant and walked down to make an order. Somehow, the truck began rolling.

The woman was dead at the scene, trapped between the truck and a car in the drive-through line.

A pregnant 14-year-old girl and two men were injured and sent to hospitals. Their conditions were not immediately available.

Eviction overreaction

UT TOOELE — A man has been accused of stabbing a dog to death with a sword in retaliation against its owner, a hotel owner who had evicted him.

Daniel Painter, 30, was charged with aggravated assault and cruelty to animals.

Police said Painter attacked a chow-Labrador mix named Kabu with a sword.

Kabu's owner, Garth Jones, he was awakened to the sound of a thud and a yelp.

Jones said the man then threatened him and chased after him, but Jones was able to run into his office and call police.

Painter was evicted after allegedly failed to pay his rent last month and attempted to negotiate a cheaper rate after complaining latex paint had hurt his health.

Off to a rough start

NY SYRACUSE — New Syracuse Chancellor Nancy Cantor had her car stolen out of the driveway of her campus residence, police said.

Cantor, who moved to Syracuse and took over as the university's first woman chancellor on Aug. 1, reported her 2004 Volvo station wagon was stolen.

There was no evidence, such as broken glass, that someone had broken into the car, police spokesman Sgt. Tom Connellan said.



..AMERICAN ROUNDUP

The car would normally have been in a locked carriage house, but that building is under renovation, SU spokesman Kevin Morrow said.

Voter ID battle

NM ALBUQUERQUE — A court battle over voter identification requirements could affect tens of thousands of voters in New Mexico, a hotly contested state in the presidential election.

The case stems from interpretation of a voter identification law enacted in July 2003. Secretary of State Rebecca Vigil-Giron has said that only new voters who registered by mail are required to show identification before voting.

But a lawsuit filed Aug. 20 by several plaintiffs, including Republican state Rep. Larry Larranaga, seeks a more strict interpretation. They want the requirement to apply to all new voters, except those who applied with a county clerk.

The lawsuit mostly affects first-time voters who did not register in county clerk's offices, many of whom were signed up in drives by groups around the state.

Tragedy on the tracks

KY DRY RIDGE — A couple were killed and their two young children injured when a



Strong winds

Rebecca Pegram is pelted with rain while the wind turns her umbrella inside out in downtown Raleigh, N.C.

train struck their car, police said.

The family's Dodge Neon had entered a private rail crossing when it was struck by the Norfolk Southern train, Kentucky State Police said.

There was no signal at the crossing in northern Kentucky's Grant County, said Robin Chapman of Norfolk Southern. State police Trooper Kevin Flick said the train whistle sounded before the crash.

Both children were fastened in child safety seats at the time of the crash, police said.

Fighting acid rain

NH THORNTON — After watching sugar maples decline for nearly two decades, researchers say they're making progress with a bold attempt to erase damage caused by acid rain.

Five years ago, scientists at the Hubbard Brook Experimental Forest dumped pellets of calcium across a 29-acre watershed in the White Mountains to replenish soils depleted of the nutrient by acid rain. Nearly five times as many seedlings sprouted on the treated watershed than on an untreated tract last year, and 42 percent of them survived to see this summer.

The experiment and several other studies have reignited a debate over whether scientists can or should counteract some of the damaging effects of acid rain.

The Hubbard Brook researchers say their findings, from the first five years of a 50-year research project, are preliminary. But already, some are taking tentative steps toward reversing the forests' fortunes.

The wrong man

GA DECATUR — A man who spent 17 years in prison for the 1986 rape, kidnapping and robbery of a hospital worker was freed after DNA evidence cleared him.

Clarence Harrison, 44, was sentenced to life in prison in 1987 on charges of sexually assaulting the woman as she waited for a bus.

A new DNA test of the rape kit used as evidence in the case showed Harrison did not commit the rape.

"All we know for sure is the culprit is not Mr. Harrison," said John Petrey, chief assistant district attorney.

The Georgia Innocence Project, founded two years ago, has received letters from more than 1,400 inmates seeking to have their convictions overturned. The project has six open cases and is investigating more than 250 others.

Nuke pill coming

PA HARRISBURG — Nuclear watchdog group Three Mile Island Alert will distribute free potassium iodide pills that can protect the thyroid gland from radiation in the event of a nuclear accident.

The pills, known as KI, are a salt compound that contains iodine. They protect the thyroid gland against cancer from radioactive iodine, which can be released during an accident. The thyroid gland is the only part of the body that is protected by KI.



Up, up and away A Lockheed Martin Corp.'s Atlas 2AS unmanned rocket, carrying a spy satellite, lights up the skies over Cape Canaveral, Fla., as it blasts off.



Surfing the web Vince Veneziani uses a wireless connection to access the Internet in Philadelphia. For about \$10 million, Philadelphia city officials believe they can turn all 135 square miles of Philadelphia into an Internet "hot spot," where anyone with a properly equipped computer could access the Web, either for free or at prices far lower than available through commercial connections.



Easy strolling Marc Bendig pulls his cooler, fishing rods and 19-month-old son, Meigher, down to the water at Lake Richard B. Russell State Park, north of Elberton, Ga.



Sit. Good dog!

Katelyn Kocher, 5, coaxes Molly, a five-year-old Shih Tzu, to do some tricks at Buster Brown Shoes national search contest in Clayton, Mo. The winning dog and child will grace the side of Buster Brown shoe boxes.



No cat naps

Mary Perloff-Nelson, of Beverly Hills, Mich., tries to keep Roxann, a hairless sphynx, from taking a nap right before being judged during Mo-Kan Cat Club's All Breed Championship at KCI Expo Center in Kansas City, Mo.



Tasting dirt

Jace Honey of La Junta, Colo., gets a face full of dirt as he works to control a steer during the steer wrestling competition of the PRCA rodeo at the Colorado State Fair in Pueblo, Colo.



Beautiful day

A surfer walks into the Pacific Ocean on a warm, sunny afternoon at Ocean Beach in San Francisco.

There's the beef

OK OKLAHOMA CITY — Thanks to Oklahoma's football riot of Texas in October, Gov. Brad Henry made a donation Thursday of 700 pounds of ground beef, enough to make 2,800 quarter-pound hamburgers.

The donation was made possible because Texas Gov. Rick Perry and the Texas Cattle Raisers Association came through with a side of beef, about 350 pounds, and it was matched by Homeland Stores.

Perry had bet the beef on the outcome of the game, which Oklahoma won, 65-13.

Fatal malfunction

OK MONROE TOWNSHIP — A parachutist died Thursday afternoon when his parachute failed to open properly and he fell into the front yard of a private residence, authorities said.

The victim, whose name was not released pending notification of family members, was an experienced jumper who had been parachuting for about 10 years, police said.

The plane used in Thursday's jump was operated by the Prefall Adventures Skydiving School of Williamstown.

David Pancake, an instructor at the school, told the Gloucester County Times parachute must be deployed at about 2,000 feet to give sufficient time to operate correctly, and that the victim may have lost track of his altitude.

Last month, a 50-year-old woman was injured when she jumped from a Prefall Adventures plane and crashed into tree branches after her parachute collapsed.

Free to good home

MI ROYAL OAK — A group that regulates the care of zoo animals has blocked the Detroit Zoo's plan to send two aging, arthritic elephants to a sanctuary, saying they must go to another zoo if anywhere.

A committee of the American Zoo and Aquarium Association said that if Winky and Wanda are to move, it should be to the Columbus Zoo.

Detroit Zoo Director Ron Kagan said in May that Detroit would be the nation's first major zoo to voluntarily give up its elephants solely on ethical grounds.

Even though Detroit's one-acre enclosure vastly exceeds American Zoo and Aquarium Association standards, Kagan said zoos generally are incapable of providing for the social, physical and emotional needs of the animals. That is particularly true of zoos in northern areas, he told the Detroit Free Press.

Habitat for stupidity

GA ALBANY — A Habitat for Humanity homeowner with family and bill problems allegedly sold her furniture and then torched her home using a candle, simulating an accidental fire, officials said.

But after investigators talked with neighbors and tracked down the buyers of the furniture, they obtained a warrant charging Jennifer Kelly, 35, with first-degree arson in the July 23 blaze.

As of Wednesday, sheriff's deputies still had not been able to find and arrest Kelly, officials said. She could face a maximum sentence of 20 years and a \$50,000 fine, if convicted.

Albany Deputy Fire Chief James Carswell said Kelly had gotten behind on mortgage payments and told several people that she would burn the home before she would allow Habitat to take it back.

Fast-food escape

MT HELENA — Two convicted murderers escaped from a prison transport van while it was parked at a fast-food restaurant, but they didn't get very far.

Five hours after breaking the windows of the van to escape while one of the guards went into Burger King on Thursday, Russell Rex VanKirk was arrested just blocks away, said Helena Police Chief Troy McGee. William Leonard Brown was captured early Friday sneaking through yards nearby, he said.

VanKirk was taken to the hospital to be treated for cuts. "He's being well guarded," McGee said. They were among four men who escaped from the van at 6 p.m. The other two escapees were immediately captured.

Judge guilty in drug case

NM BERNALILLO — A well-known former judge pleaded guilty on Thursday to cocaine possession and aggravated driving while intoxicated. He was sentenced to a year of unsupervised probation.

"I feel embarrassed and humiliated as a result of my actions," retired Judge John Brennan told former state District Judge George Perez, who accepted the plea.

Perez granted a conditional discharge to the cocaine possession charge, which means it will be removed from Brennan's record if he successfully completes probation. The DWI charge will remain on Brennan's record.

Mystery solved?

CA SEATTLE — A man already serving two life sentences for murder has been charged with committing what prosecutors say is Washington state's oldest unsolved crime, the 1968 fatal stabbing of a pregnant teenager.

John Dwight Canaday, 59, admitted recent during questioning by Seattle police detectives that he killed Sandra Bowman, according to charging papers filed Thursday.

Canaday sighed, held up his hands and declared, "Yes, I killed her," when told he had left DNA at the scene, the documents said.

A prisoner at the Walla Walla penitentiary, Canaday faces another possible life sentence for the Bowman slaying. He is scheduled to be arraigned Wednesday.

Honeymoon disaster

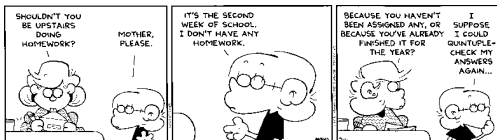
VT WATERBURY — A woman from Seattle who was celebrating her honeymoon with a hike on Hunger Mountain ended up on a stretcher with a special rescue team.

The Waterbury Backcountry Rescue Team was dispatched to the mountain late Tuesday after receiving an emergency 911 call.

The patient, a 38-year-old woman whose name was not released, was found a mile up the trail, according to rescue team leader Brian Lindner. She fell and possibly broke her leg during her descent from the summit with her husband of three days.

Stories and photos from wire services

Fox trot



B.C.



Baby Bites



Spider Man



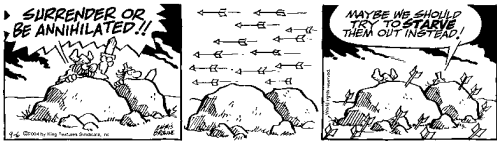
Blondie



Dilbert



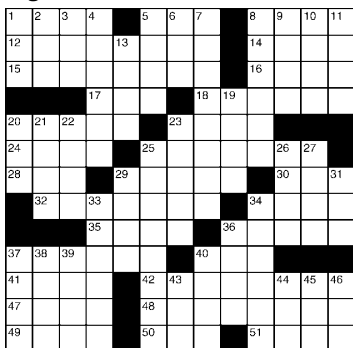
Hagar



Garfield



Eugene Sheffer Crossword



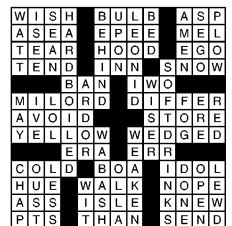
Across

- 1 Brilliant stroke
- 5 Pump up the volume
- 8 Computer data unit
- 12 Spectator
- 14 Understand a transmission
- 15 NBC news show
- 16 Tangelo
- 17 X rating?
- 18 Rub elbows
- 20 Preamble
- 23 Ocean motion
- 24 Creche figure
- 25 Direct course
- 28 Omega precursor
- 29 "— Jacques"
- 30 End a fast
- 32 1-800 service, often
- 34 Simoleons
- 35 Spandau's last inmate
- 36 Celebration
- 37 Dark purplish red
- 40 Feel unwell
- 41 Libertine
- 42 "Phone-a-friend," e.g.
- 47 Farm fraction
- 48 Evidence of changes
- 49 Prejudice

Down

- 50 Sun. speech
- 51 Dog's "dogs"
- 1 Massachusetts cape
- 2 — shoestring
- 3 Last (Abbr.)
- 4 Verse
- 5 Related
- 6 Chaps
- 7 Opening night
- 8 Malay sultanate
- 9 Safe-cracker
- 10 Lofty
- 11 Falco of "The Sopranos"
- 13 Bread spread
- 19 Between jobs
- 20 Mischievous
- 21 Crosby, Stills & —
- 22 Small combo
- 23 Adolescence
- 25 Gets defensive
- 26 In the neighborhood
- 27 Bridge position
- 29 Scoot
- 31 Your
- 33 "— Company"
- 34 Evoke
- 36 Slapstick
- 37 Grouch
- 38 Places
- 39 Emanation
- 40 Place of worship?
- 43 Wrath
- 44 Playwright Levin
- 45 Inexperienced
- 46 Double curve

Answer to Previous Puzzle



9-6

CRYPTOQUIP

HG E RCJLI IRULEXV HX
XUEFV-UCJVTNP, H XJOOCXN
TN WCJDP IHKN RCJ GDHO
XNFKHWN.

Saturday's Cryptoquip: THE ELECTRICIAN GOT DISQUALIFIED FROM THE RACE. HE'D MADE AN ILLEGAL SHORT CIRCUIT.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: O equals P

Child needs responsible parent

Dear Abby: I am a 60-year-old woman. My children are grown and I have four grand-children. I also have a godchild named "Noah," whom I adore.

Noah's mother, "Fay," didn't want him when he was born, but was talked out of giving him up by her mother and me. Her mother has since passed away.

Abby, I thought Fay would get over it, but she still doesn't want Noah. She blames him for taking her freedom away. The child is only 5 and adores his mother.

No matter what she does, Noah loves her. Fay is abusive. She yells and screams at Noah, calls him stupid and other names, keeps him in his room most of the time.

This is not a happy little boy. He has so much anger in him at such an early age. Fay was abused by her mother like she's going to her son. I have tried to get her help, but she says there's

nothing wrong with her. How can I make Fay see that she's turning Noah into a monster? The father took off as soon as he found out Fay was pregnant. He has never seen his son. Please advise me.

— Out of My Mind in Texas

Dear Abby:



Since you are Noah's godmother and there is nobody else, it is now your turn to step up to the plate. You are responsible for the fact that this unfit mother didn't place her unwanted child for adoption at birth. You are only 60 — you're not over the hill. Why don't YOU take Noah in and give him the love and support he needs — and possibly psychological counseling to undo the damage that has been done?

Dear Abby: I recently learned that my twin sister, "Leslie," is pregnant. When I heard the news, I told her I wanted to throw her a baby shower. I

have two little ones of my own, and my twin hosted my baby shower when I was pregnant with my first. Leslie was excited and gave me a thumbs up.

Today I was told that an aunt on her husband's side wants to give her a shower, and it sounds as if that's the way it's going to be. This aunt has always been bossy and pushy, and Leslie and her husband are afraid to refuse. I don't expect my twin to offend the other side of the family, but what about me? Am I being petty? My feelings are hurt.

— Rejected Twin

Dear Twin: Please stop feeling sorry. Rather than being bossy or pushy, the aunt may instead be a stickler for proper etiquette. According to "Emily Post's Etiquette" (16th Edition): "Mothers and sisters of the mother-to-be should not give a shower, although sisters-in-law, close friends, aunts or cousins may."

Letters for this column — with your name and phone number — should be addressed to Dear Abby, P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles CA 90069. Readers can email to Abby on the Internet at: <http://www.uepress.com/dearabby> Universal Press Syndicate

JUMBLE

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words

NEUSE

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YOSIN

RAPPOL

PHALER

www.jumble.com

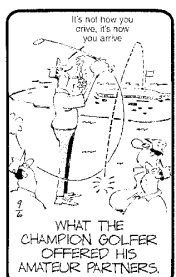
Answer:

Saturday's

Jumbles: LOONY TAWNY OUTCRY ROBBER

Answer: How she felt after modeling clothes all day — "WORN" OUT

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME by Henri Arnold and Mike Argiron



Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

(Answers tomorrow)

Strip-club fondling affects marriage

Dear Annie: My husband returned after a year's deployment with the Army. We were so happy to have him back.

However, in a casual conversation, he told me that he and his buddies had gone to a stripper bar while in the States. I was amateur night, and he knew one of the girls performing. He tried to "help her relax" by stroking several parts of her body while she gyrated. He was thrown out of the bar for fondling the dancer. He thinks this story is hilarious.

I, of course, was less amused and have asked him to leave our home of 17 years until I can think things out. He swears he only touched her. I think he crossed a line and wonder if things would have progressed had he not been tossed out.

Am I being too harsh? He swears this is the first time he has ever done anything like this, but I don't trust him. He touched another woman intimately, and if I let him get away with it, I suspect he

Annie's Mailbox



not only will do it again, he might do more.

We have two daughters who are devastated that Daddy has moved out, and they think I'm crazy for showing him the door.

— Skeptical Wife

Dear Wife: Although we usually are inclined to cut our servicemen a little slack, this is not one of those cases.

Your husband has no business stroking a semi-naked woman. The bad news is, he sees nothing wrong with his behavior. The good news is, he told you.

Please don't throw away 17 years without first seeing a marriage counselor, who can help you work through the trust issues and explain to your husband why his actions were a betrayal.

Dear Annie: Every August, my wife and I go on a vacation with her relatives. We rent a house, and the cost is divided equally between the four couples. That's the problem. I think it should be divided by the total

number of people.

Unlike the other family members, we do not have children, so why should we pay the same rate? We also are forced to take these vacations in the summer, when prices are at their peak, because that's when the kids are out of school.

Should we bring this up with the other family members before next summer or suffer in silence?

— Tired of Being Overcharged

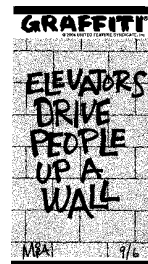
Dear Tired: Might as well bring it up, because you sound as if you are not willing to suffer in silence much longer. Family vacations can be wonderful, but your sounds like a recipe for trouble. Discuss it with your wife, and then ask the relatives about a more equitable payment plan. Otherwise, consider vacationing alone, before you become so resentful that you throw in the beach towel altogether.

Annie's Mailbox is written by Kathy Mitchell and Marcy Sugar, longtime editors of the Ann Landers syndicate. Please e-mail your questions to annie@mailbox.comcast.net, or write to: Annie's Mailbox, c/o Creators Syndicate, 5777 W. Century Blvd., Suite 700, Los Angeles, CA 90045. Creators Syndicate

Family Circus



"Why are they singing 'Take Me Out to the Ballgame'? They're already there."



Dennis the Menace



The Far Side



Non Sequitur



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Cocktail, \$15.00;
Oak, \$10.00.

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103

STRIPE CLASSIFIED

Jobs Offered

630

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Jobs Offered

630

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Fine fine for Palmer

Bengals QB impressive in last exhibition game

BY JOE KAY
The Associated Press

CINCINNATI — Other than a premature touchdown celebration on a goal-line fumble, Carson Palmer looked like an up-and-coming quarterback Friday night during the Cincinnati Bengals' 16-13 victory over the Indianapolis Colts.

The 2002 Heisman Trophy winner who didn't take a snap as a rookie looked ready to go in his final preseason game. He made good decisions against a basic Colts defense — except for his celebration, that is — and kept the offense moving in three possessions.

Palmer went 10-for-14 for 106 yards, including a 7-yard TD pass to fullback James Lynch. He thought he had another.

On a first-down pass from the Indianapolis 10, Palmer adeptly pulled off a screen pass to Rudi Johnson, who lunged for the goal line. Donald Strickland stripped the ball, forcing Johnson to land in the end zone empty-handed.

Palmer pointed at the sky in celebration, unaware that Colts linebacker David Thornton had picked up the fumble and was now rumbling his way. A stunned Palmer stopped his celebration and gave chase before Chad Johnson ran down Thornton.

It was one of Palmer's few awk-

ward moments in a solid preseason.

He completed 55 percent of his throws with four touchdowns, two interceptions and a respectable passer rating of 88.5.

"I'm not sure the numbers mean a whole lot," Palmer said. "As soon as the fourth quarter of this game is over, my thoughts start turning to the New York Jets. That's what really matters. That's what I'll be judged on."

Cautionary note: Aki Smith had a 90.4 passer rating in the 2000 preseason, then led the Bengals to a 2-8 mark before he was benched.

"I'm very satisfied," Bengals coach Marvin Lewis said of his young quarterback's showing. "I really think what we need to do now is focus in and game plan around what advantage of what the other team is doing."

No one needs to worry about the Colts' passing game — as long as Peyton Manning stays healthy. Manning played only one series on Friday, toying with a defense that was one of the league's worst last season but is hoping to do more drive and left the game unharmed.

The early returns aren't good. Manning was three of four 56 yards, throwing two of the game's prettiest passes. He down-and-out to Reggie Wayne was right where it needed to be —

on the receiver's outside shoulder just as he made his cut to the sideline and started his comeback for a 9-yard reception.

On the next play, Wayne ran right past Carson Palmer, James and Manning hit him in stride for a 38-yard touchdown play that said the Colts could have had a lot more if they wanted to.

"That's something we wanted to do," Manning said. "We were determined to go in and have a good drive. Reggie just ran right by me. We'll take that all the time."

Coach Tony Dungy had seen enough. "That's kind of what we wanted," Dungy said. "We wanted to be sharp. We did a crisp job of moving the ball down the field. The starters knew they'd be out about that first drive."

Once the starters left, the game deteriorated into a mix-and-match affair with backups trying to make an impression. Includes Colts backup quarterback Cory Sauter in that group.

Sauter, trying to win the No. 2 spot, went eight of 11 for 86 yards, most of them on short throws. He didn't have much time behind a makeshift line, and led the Colts to two field goals and left the attempt in five possessions.

Bengals rookie running back Chris Perry pulled his hamstring in the second half and left the game. He carried 14 times for 63 yards.

Three TDs in final 5:14 lift Jets

The Associated Press

EAST RUTHERFORD, N.J. — The New York Jets rallied from a 27-7 deficit, scoring three touchdowns in the last 5:14 Friday night to beat the Philadelphia Eagles 28-27 in their last exhibition game of the season.

Brooks Bollinger's 1-yard pass to Matt Dominguez with 8 seconds to go capped the comeback, which came against Philadelphia's second and third-stringers.

Bollinger entered with seven minutes remaining, replacing the rusty Quincy Carter. He led New York to Ian Sumar's 1-yard TD run on a drive highlighted by Ken-Yon Rambo's 52-yard catch and run.

The Jets then went 27 yards after rookie Roderick Bryant's interception, scoring on Bollinger's 4-yard pass to Terrance Stubbs with 3:10 remaining.

After forcing a punt, they concluded their charge with a 12-play, 87-yard drive. Bollinger, making a case to be named Chad Pennington's backup, was 11-for-20 for 168 yards.

The Eagles earlier converted two turnovers into touchdowns. Key Dettmer threw a 30-yard scoring pass immediately after an interception by rookie Brendan Haw in the second quarter, and Jeff Blake hit Sean Morey with a 5-yarder on the first series of the third period. New York's Little John Flowers fumbled the second-half kickoff.

In other games on Friday:

Redskins 27, Falcons 0: Wash-

NFL roundup

ington quarterback Mark Brunell, who won the starting job over Patrick Ramsey, went 4-for-6 for 51 yards on a 78-yard opening drive and was done for the night in Landover, Md.

Ladell Betts finished the drive with a 5-yard run and added a 3-yard score in the first quarter.

Michael Vick committed two turnovers in five snaps over three series. Vick's first pass was a desperation lob picked off by safety Matt Bowen. On the first play of

the next series, LaVar Arrington forced Vick to fumble and Antonio Pierce picked up the ball and ran 23 yards for a touchdown, capping a 24-point first quarter for the Redskins.

Vick finished 0-for-3 with one interception and one fumble.

Dolphins 20, Saints 19: In New Orleans, Jay Fiedler threw for one touchdown. Sage Rosenfels threw for another and Miami won a game they did not want to play as Hurricane Frances headed toward Florida.

Michael Lewis returned a punt 70 yards for a touchdown in the first quarter and caught a 6-yard touchdown pass from J.T. O'Sullivan in the final minutes to pull the Saints within one point. On the two-point attempt, O'Sullivan's pass was caught by Zach Hilton out of the end zone.

Browns 24, Bears 10: Jeff Garcia overcame several penalties and a few drops to throw his first touchdown pass of the year, as rookie Luke McCown threw two TD passes in the fourth quarter to rally the host Browns from a 10-7 halftime deficit.

Garcia finished five of 13 for 84 yards. Chicago's Rex Grossman went two of nine for 31 yards.

Titans 27, Packers 7: In his first exhibition game of the season, Titans cornerback Samari Rolle tipped a pass to linebacker Keith Bulluck, who returned the interception 70 yards for a touchdown, and then picked off a Brett Favre pass to help Tennessee win in Nashville, Tenn.

PK Andersen booted from K.C.

The Associated Press

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — Morten Andersen, the second-leading scorer in the NFL, was told Friday he lost his job to a kicker 18 years younger.

The 44-year-old Andersen has 2,259 points since breaking into the NFL with New Orleans in 1982. Only Gary Anderson has more points.

Kicking for the Chiefs will be 26-year-old Lawrence Tynes, who is coming off two successful seasons in the Canadian Football League as he has a longer range than Andersen.

Major League Baseball scoreboard

American League										National League										
East Division					Central Division					West Division					NL East					
W	L	Pct	GB		W	L	Pct	GB		W	L	Pct	GB		W	L	Pct	GB		
New York	63	62	50.8		Chicago	76	69	52.1		Oakland	72	66	51.9		San Diego	68	66	50.8		
Baltimore	63	62	50.8		Minnesota	66	67	49.6		Los Angeles	70	65	51.9		St. Louis	65	66	49.6		
Tampa Bay	59	70	45.4	23½	Detroit	62	74	45.4	23½	Colorado	62	74	45.4	23½	San Francisco	62	74	45.4	23½	
Seattle	59	70	45.4	23½	Kansas City	62	74	45.4	23½	Texas	74	60	55.2		Arizona	62	74	45.4	23½	
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Giambi mum on report of tumor

The Associated Press

NEW YORK — Yankees slugger Jason Giambi still wants to keep his medical situation private, even though a newspaper report Friday detailed the location and treatment of his benign tumor.

MLB briefs

Citing three anonymous major league sources, the Daily News reported that Giambi has been getting treatment for a tumor in his pituitary gland, which is about the size of a pea and is located at the base of the brain.

The newspaper said the treatment includes a form of steroids that does not enhance athletic performance, and was approved by Major League Baseball.

The Yankees would not confirm the report, spokesman Rick Cerrone and General Manager Brian Cashman said. The team released a short statement about the "published speculation" with Giambi's comments.

"While I understand the continuing speculation surrounding the details of my medical condition, I continue to believe that it is a private matter. I appreciate the interest the media has a job to do, but my focus now is on returning and contributing to this team," Giambi said.

Padres LHP Hitchcock retires

SAN DIEGO — Left-hander Sterling Hitchcock, the hero of San Diego's 1998 playoff run, retired Friday night after 12 years in the big leagues.

The 33-year-old Hitchcock, who had reconstructive surgery on his left elbow in 2001, was plagued by rib, groin and elbow injuries this season after returning to the Padres as a free agent.

Hitchcock helped pitch the Padres into the 1998 World Series, going 2-0 with a 0.90 ERA against the Atlanta Braves to earn MVP honors in the championship series. The Padres were swept in the World Series by the Yankees.

A's Dye has fractured thumb

TORONTO — Oakland Athletics right fielder Jermaine Dye missed Saturday's game because of a fractured left thumb and is not expected to be back in the lineup for some time.

Dye left Friday's game in the sixth inning because of soreness. He missed the previous three games and has been bothered by it for about a month. He broke it while playing for a ball in early August.

Suspensions overturned for Red Sox's Nixon, Kapler

BOSTON — Red Sox outfielders Gabby Kapler and Troy Nixon had their three-game suspensions overturned on Friday for their roles in an on-field brawl with the New York Yankees July 24.

Alex Rodriguez and Jason Vantek already have served four-game suspensions.

D-backs' bullpen folds vs. Giants

The Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO — Dustan Mohr doubled in the tying run in the eighth and Deivi Cruz hit a two-run single two batters later, leading the San Francisco Giants to a 9-7 victory over the Arizona Diamondbacks on Saturday.

Marquis Grissom hit a grand slam and also started the eighth-inning rally with a single.

San Francisco came back from a 7-1 deficit to beat the Diamondbacks for the seventh straight time. They pulled within a half-game of the idle Chicago Cubs in the NL wild-card race. The Cubs had their weekend series at Florida postponed because of Hurricane Frances.

Barry Bonds went 2-for-3 with a double and a walk, but didn't homer on a day manager Felipe Alou predicted would be a "hitter's festival" because of the heat. It was 87 degrees at first pitch.

Scott Eyre (1-2) pitched the eighth for the win and Dustin Hermanson finished for his ninth save.

Arizona manager Al Pedrique had to be restrained by his coaching staff after the game as he argued with the umpire crew.

Arizona reliever Mike Kopeckie took the loss.

In Friday's NL games:

Giants 18, Diamondbacks 7: Barry Bonds moved within three home runs of joining Hank Aaron and Babe Ruth in baseball's 700 club.

Bonds hit his 697th homer at SBC Park on Friday night, a two-run shot off Edgardo Gonzalez (0-8) in the second inning.

The six-time MVP finished 1-for-2 with a sacrifice fly and two intentional walks, upping his season total to 100 this season.

Edgardo Alfonzo had five hits, J.T. Snow added four hits and Cody Ransom, who entered the game with nine RBIs in his career, drove in four runs.



San Diego Padres' Phil Nevin, right, is congratulated by teammates Ryan Klesko, left, and Mark Loretta after his three-run homer in the seventh inning against the Colorado Rockies on Friday in San Diego.

Astros 8, Pirates 6: Roger Clemens got his 325th win to pass Nolan Ryan and Don Sutton for sole possession of 12th place on the career list, and the reigning Astros won at Minute Maid Park for their season-high seventh consecutive victory.

Jeff Bagwell, Carlos Beltran, Craig Biggio and Jose Vazquez homered to help Houston improve to 10-1 in its last 11 games and close within 2½ games of the idle Cubs in the wild-card race.

Clemens (15-4) allowed four runs and six hits in 6½ innings.

The Rocket entered added a run-scoring single in the sixth for his seventh RBI of the season.

Padres 7, Rockies 6: Phil Nevin hit a three-run homer with

two outs in the seventh inning, and the Padres rallied at home from a five-run deficit to move within two games of Chicago in the wild-card race.

Vinny Castilla homered twice and drove in four runs for the Rockies, raising his RBI total to 112—second in the NL.

Scott Linebrink (6-1) pitched a perfect seventh for the win, and Trevor Hoffman worked the ninth for his 34th save.

Cardinals 3, Dodgers 0: Matt Morris pitched a two-hitter to help the Cardinals win their seventh straight, striking out a season-high 11 in the matchup of division leaders.

Reggie Sanders homered, doubled and had two RBIs. Mike Ma-

NL Roundup

they also homered for the Cardinals, who have won 11 of 13 over-all and are a major league-best 90-44.

Morris (15-8) won his third straight start and walked none. He retired the last 14 batters in his second shutout this season.

Braves 7, Expos 1: Paul Byrd pitched eight strong innings, and Eli Marrero homered at Olympic Stadium to help Atlanta extend its winning streak to four games.

Byrd (6-4), who returned June 19 from Tommy John surgery after missing all of the 2003 season, allowed four hits, struck out five and walked two.

J.D. Drew hit an RBI single in the third to extend his hitting streak to 12 games. The Braves had nine hits, ending a streak of 12 straight games of 10 or more.

Phillies 8, Mets 1: Gavin Floyd held the Mets to four hits over seven innings in his major league debut, sending New York to its seventh straight loss.

Pat Burrell homered in his first game since Aug. 3. Jason Michaels homered twice and Placido Polanco also connected for the Phillies at Citizens Bank Park.

The Mets, coming off a 1-10 homestand, have lost 12 of 13.

Brewers 11, Reds 4: At Milwaukee, Greg Jenkins and Wes Helms drove in three runs each, and Scott Podsednik tied a career high with four hits for the Brewers.

Helms and Gary Bennett homered for Milwaukee, which scored its most runs since beating Anaheim 12-2 on June 9 and won consecutive games for the first time since Aug. 8-10. Milwaukee is 13-35 since the All-Star break.

Wes Obermueller (5-7) allowed four runs, six hits and four walks in six innings.

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Ponson shuts out Yankees

The Associated Press

NEW YORK — The New York Yankees can't even push a runner past first base lately, much less find a way to score.

Sidney Ponson became the latest pitcher to stop the suddenly puny Yankees, throwing a two-hitter in his fourth career shutout in the Baltimore Orioles' 7-0 victory Saturday.

Ponson faced just 29 hitters, two more than the minimum, and did not allow a runner past first. In fact, the Yankees have advanced only one runner beyond first in their last 17 innings — since the first inning of a 3-1 loss to Rodrigo Lopez and the Orioles on Friday night.

"Our offense is going to be fine," Alex Rodriguez said. "We've thrown a great game. Ponson just got to go back to playing a little baseball, take some small bites."

Maybe, but this is no time for a major slump.

New York leads the AL East by only 2½ games over Boston. And the Yankees will be without starting pitcher Kevin Brown for at least three weeks — possibly the



Baltimore's Jay Gibbons follows through on a solo home run against the Yankees on Saturday.

rest of the season. He was examined by a hand specialist at Yankee Stadium after breaking his non-pitching hand when he punched a clubhouse wall Friday night.

"It's obviously a big blow for our team. We have to go on and find a way to win games," said Rodriguez, who declined to comment when asked about the way Brown hurt himself.

Rafael Palmeiro, Jay Gibbons and Brian Roberts homered for the Orioles, who have won six in a row following a 12-game losing streak. Baltimore starters are 4-0 with a 0.61 ERA in the last four games.

Mike Mussina allowed just two runs in seven innings for the Yankees, his best outing since coming off the disabled list.

Red Sox's 10-game comeback falls short as Rangers win 8-6 at Fenway

The Associated Press

BOSTON — Even Hollywood couldn't prolong Boston's winning streak.

The Red Sox lost for the first time in 10 games, falling to the Texas Rangers 8-6 Saturday and missing a chance to pull within 1½ games in the AL East.

With actors Drew Barrymore and Jimmy Fallon seated near the Red Sox on-deck circle as a crew filmed scenes for a movie about Opening Day at Fenway, the streak ended with a lit-tle-known right-hander stopping the hottest team in the majors for his first big league win.

On hand to film "Fever Pitch," the two stars changed jumped up and joined the cheering fans along the first-base line as the Red Sox rallied in the seventh, then again after the Yankees' final score was posted on the left-field scoreboard.

Chris Young, a 25-year-old righty making just his third big league start, held the Red Sox to one run and two hits in 5½ innings. Young (1-1) relied mostly on fastballs with an occasional curve and changeup thrown in.

"We scored some runs and Chris was outstanding," Texas manager Buck Showalter said.

The Red Sox, who had won 10 straight and 16 of 17 to climb from 10½ games back in the AL East, remained 2½ games behind the division-leading Yankees.

It was Boston's longest winning streak since capturing 12 straight Aug. 3-14, 1995, the year the Red Sox last won the AL East title. Since then, New York has won seven of eight division crowns.

Boston had picked up eight games on the Yankees in 19 days. "I couldn't let that stuff affect me," Young said of Boston's run. "If you get wrapped up in that stuff, you're done before you start."

Michael Young hit a three-run

AL Roundup

homer and Rod Barajas went 3-for-4 with a two-run shot for Texas, which snapped a five-game losing streak.

Twins 4, Royals 3: Terry Lofgren led off the bottom of the ninth with his first major league home run to lift Minnesota past visiting Kansas City.

Tiffie, who joined the Twins when rosters expanded on Sept. 1, hit a 2-2 pitch from Denrys Reyes (3-8) over the left-field fence to give the Twins their fifth straight victory.

Tiffie went 3-for-4 and is hitting .462 since arriving in Minnesota.

Athletics 9, Blue Jays 5: Oakland scored twice on wild pitches to tie it, and Eric Byrnes provided insurance with a three-run double in the ninth, propelling the A's to their 16th win in the last 18 games.

Oakland pulled within 5-4 in the eighth on a wild pitch from Vinnie Chulk, then tied it in the ninth on another miscue by Jason Prisor. Mark McLemore put the A's ahead with a sacrifice fly before Byrnes' big hit.

In Friday's AL games:

Red Sox 2, Rangers 0: Pedro Martinez allowed four hits in seven innings, including Manny Ramirez and Bill Mueller homered to extend Boston's winning streak to 10.

Martinez (15-5) pitched shut-out ball for the second time in five starts, striking out nine, walking one and leaving after misplaying his second-inning high with 17 hits.

Orioles 5, Yankees 4: Rodriguez (11-8) outpitched Kevin Brown and Miguel Tejada got his major league-leading 122nd RBI as the streaky Orioles won their fifth straight following a 12-game losing streak.

Derek Jeter homered in the first inning for the Yankees.

Athletics 7, Blue Jays 4: Bobby Kielty hit a two-run homer in the sixth off Ted Lilly (9-10) for a 5-4 lead and Nick Swisher doubled and walked twice in his major league debut at SkyDome.

Tim Hudson (11-4) allowed four runs and eight hits in seven innings, and Octavio Delgado pitched the ninth for his 17th save.

Angels 10, Indians 5: Troy Glaus homered for the first time since May 11, and Garrett Anderson and Bengie Molina also homered for visiting Anaheim, which stayed four games behind AL West-leading Oakland.

Kelvin Escobar (9-9) improved to 4-1 in his last six starts.

Twins 2, Royals 0: Johan Santana (16-6) didn't allow a hit at the Minnesota home of the Twins. Delgado found a clean single to left leading off the seventh.

That was the only hit in seven innings off Santana, who won his ninth straight game.

Joe Nathan finished the two-hitter with a perfect ninth for his 38th save.

Tigers 4, Devil Rays 2: At St. Petersburg, Florida, Jeremy Bonamant (8-11) gave up two runs and four hits in seven innings to hand rookie Scott Kazmir (1-1) his first loss. The Yankees' Mark Young hit a two-run homer to extend the Devil Rays' skid to seven games.

The remainder of the three-game series on Saturday and Sunday was postponed because of Hurricane Frances.

White Sox 7, Mariners 5: Juan Uribe homered, Roberto Alomar hit a clutch hitting homer and Ichiro Suzuki (10-10) allowed four runs and eight hits in seven-plus innings. Shingo Takatsu pitched the ninth for his 15th save.

Ichiro Suzuki was 1-for-4 with one RBI for the visiting Mariners.

Brown breaks hand punching wall

The Associated Press

NEW YORK — Kevin Brown might have punched himself out of the pennant race, and the New York Yankees are angry about it.

Brown (10-4) broke his non-pitching hand when he punched a wall in the clubhouse Friday night during New York's 3-1 loss to the Baltimore Orioles.

"You just can't do that, there's no doubt about it. You've got to keep your emotions in check," Yankees General Manager Brian Cashman said. "It's a major issue that we shouldn't be dealing with. It's a problem."

Now the Yankees might be

without one of their best pitchers down the stretch. Frustrated by an injury-filled season, Brown's hot temper could cost New York at the most important time.

"Stupidity," he said, choosing his words carefully. "I reacted to frustration I'd swallowed all year. ... There are no excuses. I let it boil over and I did something stupid. I owe my teammates an apology for letting my emotions take over like that."

Already short on starting pitching, the Yankees were unsure how long the 39-year-old right-hander might be out. He was to be examined by a hand specialist Saturday.

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SEPTEMBER, FROM BACK PAGE

Atlanta, aiming for its 13th straight division title, St. Louis, Minnesota and Los Angeles all held comfortable leads going into the weekend.

"Our best baseball is ahead of us. I really believe that," Cardinals manager Tony La Russa said.

Albert Pujols, Scott Rolen, Jim Edmonds and newcomer Larry Walker have given St. Louis the best record in the majors. The Twins, led by Cy Young candidate Johan Santana, held a big edge in the AL Central.

"I hate to be cocky, but if we lose this lead here I don't think we should have a team," showy center fielder Tori Hunter said.

The Twins led Cleveland by nine games as the weekend approached.

According to Elias, no major league team has ever overcome such a large edge in September to win a division or league title.

September: Cards coasting into playoffs

The Cardinals made up an 8½-game gap in September 1964 to win the NL pennant, helped by Philadelphia's infamous collapse under manager Gene Mauch. This year, the Phillies' fold may cost manager Larry Bowa his job.

Boosted by Rich Harden's addition to a rotation that includes Mark Mulder, Tim Lincecum and Barry Zito, the Oakland Athletics were holding off Anaheim and Texas in the AL West.

Seattle is the only team in the AL West out of contention, a tough way for Edgar Martinez to go out in his final season. But Suzuki is on a tear for the Mariners. With 218 hits through Friday, he had 28 games left to break George Sisler's record of 257 hits in the 1920 with the St. Louis Browns.

"He's on the verge of doing something nobody else has ever done in this game," Mariners manager Bob Melvin said. "Even in Little League, you don't see numbers like this. It's ridiculous."

With their hefty stats, Boston sluggers Manny Ramirez and David Ortiz, Anaheim star Vladimir Guerrero and the Yankees' clutch-hitting slugger Sheffield are smack in contention for the AL MVP award. Adrian Beltré of the Dodgers is right there for the NL honor.

For some clubs, 2004 is not going to be their year. The Montreal Expos might not even be around next season — no decision yet from Bud Selig. And then again, some things just won't get settled this year.

In their final meeting this season, the Astros and Cubs go to testy at Wrigley Field. A pitch to Lance Berkman sailed close to his helmet and he went to the ground — yet from Bud Selig. "It didn't hit me square," and the Cubs accused him of faking it.

Chances are, the Astros and Cubs and all of their hard throwers will square that squabble in 2005.

Associated Press sports writer Janie McCauley contributed to this story.



DAVE ORNAUER/Stars and Stripes

Yokota running back Chris Roach gained 215 yards and scored six touchdowns in the Panthers' 56-7 victory over Edgren on Saturday.

Yokota runs streak of on-field wins to 40

Stars and Stripes

YOKOTA AIR BASE, Japan — One Roach departs, another takes his place. And for the Yokota Panthers on Saturday, the second Roach's heroics yielded a Pacific-record 40th consecutive win on the field.

Senior tailback Chris Roach piled up 215 yards and scored six times on just nine touches and the Panthers rolled to a 56-7 triumph over the Robert D. Edgren Eagles.

"I'm proud of the way the kids played today," coach Tim Pujol said. "Good timing, good execution, good rhythm. For Japan Football League game No. 1, I'm encouraged."

Especially encouraging was the performance of Roach, whose older brother Roy graduated last June after breaking the JFL season rushing record with 1,891 yards.

Chris Roach, who gained 1,051 all-purpose yards and scored 18 touchdowns last season at wingback, moved into Roy's featured back spot and performed just as capably, scoring the last five times he touched the ball.

"It's tradition," he said. "We have the same intensity, determination and heart, even if the faces have changed."

The last of those was a 71-yard punt-return touchdown. He bobbed the punt, then picked it up, crossed the field to the left sideline and ran untouched into the end zone.

"He sees things developing in front of him," assistant coach Steve Sanchez said. "He knows which way to run."

"I have good blocking this year," Roach said. "You can see the play developing so far back. It's like seeing everything in slow motion. I follow my key blockers."

Despite the blowout, Pujol feels there's plenty of room for improvement.

"Gap control, proper pursuit on defense. We had some blown as-

Prep football

signments, we left some people unblocked at the point of attack," Pujol said.

Still, Pujol took pride in the Panthers' winning streak, which began on Sept. 20, 2000, with an 18-6 victory over the American School in Japan.

Of the 40 victories, the two which opened the 2002 season had to be vacated when Pujol discovered the Panthers had used an ineligible player, leading some to say the streak isn't legitimate.

"I understand the other viewpoint," Pujol said. "But as far as what the kids did on the field between the lines, I know in my heart that it's 40."

The coach of the vanquished Eagles was suitably impressed.

"The record is no accident," Jim Burgeson said. "They've been very successful. I doubt they ran any more than five plays, it was so well executed. If it ain't broke, don't fix it."

The Eagles play their home opener Saturday against JLL, which is making its first football road trip out of the Kanto Plain in school history. Yokota hosts Zama American on Friday.

Father Duanas 37, Guam 0: At Mangilao, Guam, Eddie Calvo ran nine times for 141 yards and two touchdowns as Father Duanas shut out Guam High in the Independent Interscholastic Athletic Association of Guam opener for both teams.

Matt Sgro and Vinson Calvo each recovered fumbles in the end zone and Vince Phillips scrambled 9 yards for a touchdown for the Friars, who also scored a safety and forced five fumbles.

Guam High was held to 31 yards on the ground and minus-10 passing. Dustin Lopez set the pace for the Panthers with 28 yards on three carries, and Joey Chop had a team-high eight tackles.

Yokosuka, Misawa earn return to league championship game

Stars and Stripes

One team breezed to victory Saturday. The other needed defensive heroics.

The end result: the Yokosuka Seahawks and Misawa Marauders are back in the U.S. Forces Japan-American Football League championship game. Yokosuka hosts Misawa next Saturday at 4 p.m. at Berkeley Field.

Roy Roberts led a punishing Yokosuka running attack with 136 yards and two touchdowns on 16 carries in the Seahawks' 44-3 semifinal romp over the Atsugi White Dolphins.

The Marauders forced four fumbles, scored their only touchdown on James Garcia's 1-yard burst in the second quarter and David Varner's extra-point kick proved to be the difference in a 7-6 victory over the Yokota Raiders.

Misawa 7, Yokota 6: At Misawa Air Base, Japan, defensive end Kenji Blackwell put on a stunning defensive display, forcing four fumbles that were recovered by teammates before a joyous home crowd bolstered by the ranks of visitors to the annual Misawa Air Show.

"Our special teams got us into trouble," Marauders assistant coach Thomas Mangan said of a unit that allowed Yokota to get 10 shots at the end zone in the fourth quarter, with only Kevin Hill's 1-yard run to show for it.

The Marauders got their usual helping of rushing yards from reg-

USFJ-AFL

ular-season league leader James Coleman, who ran 27 times for 187 yards. Blackwell also had a team-leading five tackles and two sacks.

"Any time you get to the championship game, it feels good," Mangan said. "But it's more fitting to go to Yokosuka and try to keep them from a fifth straight title. That's the exciting part."

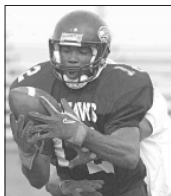
The teams have played some contentious games. Yokosuka beat Misawa 16-6 in the 2002 title game, also at Berkeley. This season, the Marauders handily beat the Seahawks 27-6 at Misawa, but lost a heartbreaker 18-12 to Yokosuka in four overtimes at Ikego Heights Naval Housing Facility.

"There's something between us," Mangan said. "We still have a bitter taste in our mouth from that four-overtime game."

Yokosuka 44, Atsugi 3: The Seahawks' defense was the star of the fight of their lives, coach Isaac Lee said.

"It seems like that's the way it's been ever since I've been here," Lee said. "We have to buckle up. They're going to hit you in the mouth. That game is going to be a slugfest."

Against Atsugi, the Seahawks stuck with what Lee says works, a ground-oriented attack paced by Roberts. Aaron Stegall also ran for a touchdown, as did quarter-



JIM SCHULZ/Stars and Stripes

Yokosuka Seahawks' Leon Howell makes a catch during Saturday's semifinal against Atsugi.

backs Alvin Johnson and Robert Trisby. Even linebacker Lynell Tarver got into the act, scoring on the game's last play.

Yokosuka rushed for 263 yards on 36 attempts. Johnson was 7-for-12 for 93 yards.

On defense, Corey Court recovered two fumbles and intercepted a pass, as did former White Dolphin Ryan York. Tarver added a sack.

For outmanned Atsugi, which had just 15 players, Josh Bunn went 10-for-27 for 131 yards, with Javar Williams catching seven passes for 99 yards. But all they had to show for it was Bunn's 55-yard goal 7:18 before halftime.

"The weather and then being undermanned, that will take it out of you," Lee said. "A healthy dose of running will wear you down."

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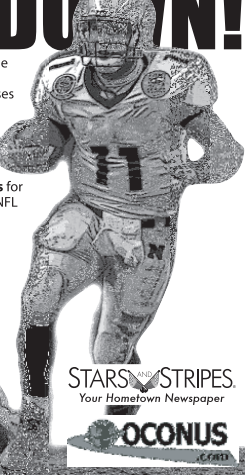
Official rules of play will be announced at the start of the contest on September 6, 2004 within Stars and Stripes and on www.stripes.com. There is no cost to play, certain rules and restrictions apply.

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Ga. Tech admits certifying athletes who weren't eligible

The Associated Press

ATLANTA — Georgia Tech acknowledged Friday that it certified 17 athletes as eligible when they had not met the NCAA's academic requirements.

Athletic director Dave Braine said the violations — which Georgia Tech considers secondary — were reported to the NCAA. The school offered to penalize itself, but did not reveal the nature of its proposed sanctions.

"Certainly there was no deliberate intent to incorrectly certify student-athletes," Braine said in a statement. "At the time, we believed that these athletes had met all the necessary criteria."

Seventeen athletes from four different sports were certified as eligible when they had not met NCAA requirements. The violations occurred over the last five years.

Georgia Tech did not release the names of the athletes, citing privacy laws.

All but one of the athletes earned the required 24 credit hours for the academic year average, the school said.

All of the cases can be characterized as errors of omission, not commission," Braine said. "Still, we accept responsibility for the mistakes that were made, and we have new procedures in place to prevent future errors."

He said six of the athletes had graduated, while two more are on track to earn their degrees this school year.

"The remainder," Braine added, "have made significant progress toward their degrees."

Sports briefs

Vanderbilt football coach Johnson receives extension

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — Vanderbilt coach Bobby Johnson signed a new contract Friday, less than a day before the Commodores were to open the season against South Carolina. Terms of the deal were not released.

Johnson is 4-20 with one Southeastern Conference victory in two seasons leading the Commodores. Vanderbilt has not had a winning season since 1982, but it turns 21 of 22 starters this season.

The Commodores snapped a 23-game conference losing skid, the worst in the nation, against Kentucky last November.

Johnson accepted the job at Vanderbilt one day after leading Furman to the Division I-AA national championship game in 2001.

UCLA will receiver Perry cleared to play

LOS ANGELES — Tab Perry was cleared by the NCAA on Friday to play for UCLA this season, giving the Bruins a major boost at receiver.

Perry, a senior who also returns kicks, was academically ineligible last season and dismissed from school in January. He was readmitted Aug. 18.

The Bruins were to open the season Saturday against Oklahoma State at the Rose Bowl. They were 6-7 last season, their first under coach Karl Dorrell.

Perry caught 35 passes for 698 yards two years ago. The 6-foot-3 receiver has 62 career receptions for 1,172 yards and three touchdowns.

Warriors release Jones

OAKLAND, Calif. — Forward Pokey Jones was released by the Golden State Warriors on Friday. The 6-foot-8 Jones played five games in his only season with the Warriors, who acquired him last summer in a trade with Dallas. Jones was cartilage in his right knee Nov. 5 and was placed on the injured list a week later, missing 24 games.

A 12-year NBA veteran, Jones played for Toronto, Boston, Denver, Washington and two stints with the Mavericks.

Lynx's Smith undergoes knee surgery

MINNEAPOLIS — Minnesota Lynx guard and Olympic gold medalist Katie Smith underwent surgery Friday on her right knee and will miss the remainder of the season.

The four-time All-Star is expected to return at the start of next season in early May.

The surgery repaired the medial meniscus and reconstructed the anterior cruciate ligament. Smith, who re injured her knee in Athens, has had three knee surgeries in her career.

She bruised her knee against the Washington Mystics on July 23. She did further damage in a victory against China in an Olympic preliminary game.

Smith, third-best in the WNBA this season, thrived in the WNBA.

Teammates fighting to get into top 10

By Mike Harris

The Associated Press

PONTIAC, Calif. — Jeremy Mayfield excited about the race for a top-10 position in NASCAR's Nextel Cup series.

"It's pretty cool that it's coming down this close just for 10th," Mayfield said Friday after qualifying right behind pole-winner Brian Vickers for the Pop Secret 500 at California Speedway.

"We could come down eighth or ninth this weekend. You never know any more what's going to happen and how the race is going to end up."

There are lots of drivers on the bubble or close to it heading into Sunday's race, one of only two remaining before the championship contenders are panned to the top 10 for the 10-race run to the title.

Mayfield and Evernham Motorsports teammate Casey Kahne are among the drivers who need a good race this weekend.

Both got off to a good start Friday, with Kahne qualifying fifth.

The qualifying effort by Mayfield, tied for 12th in the points, and Kahne, 11th, overshadowed the second career pole by the 20-year-old Vickers, who turned a lap of 187.417 miles, and the strong showing by 48-year-old Bill Elliott, the semiretired former series champion who qualified at 186.364 despite running in only his fifth race of the season and first since early last month at Indianapolis.

"It was awesome," Vickers said. "The guys did a good job. It stuck. What else can I say?"

Elliott said he was surprised by his pole.

"We changed everything but the driver after practice," he said. "I asked what we ran, and when they told me, I thought they were kidding."

College football scoreboard

Saturday's results

EAST
American International 15, Bryant 7
Baldwin-Wallace 27, Allegheny 14
Brookland 42, Cortland 52
Clemson 35, North Carolina 34
Connecticut 52, Murray 51
Dickinson 45, Juniata 6
Duquesne 31, Holy Cross 7
Buffalo 33, Central 24
Georgetown 42, St. Francis, Pa. 7
Graceland 34, Manhattan 34
Johns Hopkins 34, Rochester 17
Kutztown 25, Clarion 14
Lafayette 46, Marist 7
Lebanon Valley 7, Gettysburg 33
Longwood 25, Stony Brook 7
Mercyhurst 45, N. Michigan 27
New England 37, Plymouth 34
Muhlenberg 17, Kings Point 13
Northwestern 71, Chicago 0
Norwich 21, Mount Ida 20
Randolph-Macon 30, Chowan 10
Rhode Island 37, Fordham 34
Robert Morris 47, Buffalo 20
Salisbury 33, Catholic 14
Shippensburg 35, Shepherd 7
South 48, Plymouth 34
Stonewall 27, Assumption 6
Susquehanna 43, Ursinus 19
Virginia 44, Temple 14
West Virginia 27, Maryland 7
Wagner 35, La Salle 26
Waynesburg 64, Denison 0
Winthrop 41, Weber International 7
Wis.-Platteville 40, Thiel 14

SOUTH
Alabama 21, Howard 12
Arkansas 21, Delaware St. 0
Carson-Newman 38, West Georgia 24
Charlotte Southern 41, Citadel 22
Georgia Tech 28, Samford 7
Kean 17, Apprentice 14, Ft. Pierce 14
Middle Tennessee 41, O'Connell 38
North Carolina 40, William 38
Savannah 31, Bethune-Cookman, cond.

WEST
California 21, San Diego 14
Colorado 21, Stanford 14
Idaho 21, Washington 14
Oregon 21, Oregon State 14
Utah 21, Utah State 14
Washington 21, Washington State 14
Wyoming 21, Wyoming State 14

FAIR WEATHER
Shaw 49, Johnson C. Smith 14
South Carolina 13, Vanderbilt 6
Towson 34, Elon 13
Tulane 34, West Alabama 0
Weber 28, Ferris 27

MIDWEST
Adrian 24, Heidelberg 14
Albion 14, Butler 12
Augustana, S.D., Central 7
Augustana, S.D., North 7
Buffalo 33, Central 24
Capital 49, Wittenberg 16
Carnegie-Mellon 44, Hiram 0
Case Reserve 18, Oberlin 15
Cleveland 34, Cleveland-Oakland 21
Iowa 35, Kent 57
Iowa St. 22, N. Iowa 0
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Ohio Northern 31, Westminster, Pa. 7
Ola 35, 22, N. Iowa 0
Lakeland 47, Northwestern, Minn. 7
Lawrence 34, Knox 7
Marquette 13, Dubuque 8
Michigan 43, Miami (Ohio) 10
Michigan Tech 17, Indianapolis 10
Minn.-Marquette 48, Parkland 35
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Air Force slammed by No. 13 Cal, 56-14

No upset for Falcons this time as Bears pull away in second half

By JOHN MARSHALL

The Associated Press

AIR FORCE ACADEMY, Colo. — Struggling with Air Force's unbalanced offensive line, California was in danger of another disappointing loss to the Falcons.

A little work on the sidelines and some adjustments at halftime by the Golden Bears turned the game into a rout.

J.J. Arrington ran for 181 yards and three touchdowns and California finally figured out Air Force's maddening scheme, helping the 13th-ranked Bears pull away in the second half of a 56-14 victory Saturday.

Air Force knocked off Cal the last time the Bears were ranked in 2002 and another upset appeared to be brewing when the Falcons were within seven points at halftime.

Unable to figure out Air Force's unbalanced offensive line, three linemen on one side of the ball, one on the other — the Bears spent much of the first half shifting around trying to decipher where to line up. That usually left the linemen out of position, not a good thing against the disciplined Falcons and their triple-option attack.

Once they worked things out, the Bears dominated the second half.

"They had a formation in the first that we hadn't seen before

and the kids had a hard time getting lined up to it," Cal defensive coordinator Bob Gregory said. "We just got them settled down in the locker room and put all the sets on the board, and we just knew if we could just get aligned right we'd be OK. And that's what we did. The guys got aligned right and we had a great second half."

They sure did.

Taking advantage of the confused Bears, Air Force had 214 yards on its first three drives, scoring two touchdowns. But after Cal got itself aligned correctly, the Falcons managed just 12 yards in their next four drives. Air Force finished with 271 total yards — 56 in the second half.

"I thought the first half we played well and moved the ball," said Air Force quarterback Shaun Carney, who finished with 75 yards on 18 carries and was 8-for-15 for 89 yards passing. "In the second half, credit Cal for making some good adjustments. But there's no excuse for that. We've still got to go out and make plays."

The defense wasn't much better, giving up the most points on opening day in school history.

Cal's offense got off to a quick start and never really slowed.

The Bears had touchdowns on their first three possessions and put the game away with five more in the second half. Cal finished with 573 yards to survive a diffi-



Air Force cornerback Sid Slater (59) during the second quarter Saturday. Cal went on to defeat Air Force 56-14.

cult opening road test in a season that started with the school's highest preseason ranking in 50 years.

"We were just trying to keep the base plays and they just couldn't stop it," said Aaron Rodgers, who was an efficient 11-for-16 with no interceptions. "Our line dominated the line of scrimmage and made some huge holes."

It just took a little while for Cal to shake the pesky Falcons.

Cal used a mix of short passes and runs behind the tackles to move 80 yards in 12 plays on its first drive. Arrington capped it with an 11-yard touchdown run, taking off right and cutting back through a hole up the middle to score easily.

White throws three TDs for No. 2 Sooners

By JEFF LATZKE

The Associated Press

NORMAN, Okla. — Kejuan Jones rushed for a career-high 148 yards and a touchdown and Mark Clayton caught two of Jason White's three touchdown passes, leading No. 2 Oklahoma to a 40-24 victory over Bowling Green on Saturday.

White, the returning Heisman Trophy winner, completed 20 of 30 passes for 224 yards, but also threw an interception that was returned for a touchdown.

Adrian Peterson, the Sooners' top-rated high-school recruit, flashed brilliance with a 35-yard touchdown run and finished with 100 yards on 16 carries. But he also fumbled out of bounds on two of his first six carries.

With White recovered from knee surgery and a broken bone in his left foot, Oklahoma's offense was able to operate frequently with White under center instead of in the shotgun. The Sooners' offensive line — which returned all five starters from last season — opened huge holes for Jones to run through and prevented White from being sacked.

The oft-injured White was hit hard only twice — on a 2-yard run on a busted play to end the first quarter and following an incomplete pass in the third quarter. He even pulled the ball down and ran 6 yards for a first down early in the fourth quarter.

White, the first Heisman winner to return since BYU's Ty Detmer in 1991, was brilliant early. He went 12-for-15 in the first half and one incompletion hit receiver Brandon Jones in the hands.

Backup QB Henne delivers for No. 8 Michigan

The Associated Press

ANN ARBOR, Mich. — Freshman Chad Henne threw two touchdowns in a surprising start for Michigan, helping the eighth-ranked Wolverines to a 13-10 victory over Miami of Ohio on Saturday that ended the nation's longest winning streak.

Matt Gutierrez was supposed to start, but he was relegated to holding on kicks because of a sore arm, creating an opportunity for Henne. Rick Leach is the only other quarterback to start as a freshman for the Wolverines. Leach led Michigan to a victory on Sept. 13, 1975, at Wisconsin.

Henne, wearing the same No. 7 Leach and Drew Hansen were, was 14-for-24 for 142 yards with one interception. Braylon Edwards caught six passes for 91 yards and two TDs, and David Underwood gained 61 yards with two touchdowns on 22 carries.

The RedHawks (1-1) had won 14 straight games, 13 times last year with quarterback Ben Roethlisberger. Roethlisberger, a first-round draft pick by the Pitts-

AP Top 25 roundup

burgh Steelers, saw his replacement have a rough day as he watched from the sideline.

Josh Betts was 18-for-36 for 201 yards with four interceptions and a fumble. He accounted for four TDs last week in a 49-0 rout over Division I-AA Indiana State.

Martin Gorman and Michael Larkin combined for nine receptions and 108 yards, but Miami struggled to run the ball. Luke Clemens had 13 carries for 32 yards.

After a scoreless first quarter, Michigan led 24-0 midway through the third quarter.

The RedHawks then made it interesting with a field goal, Mike Smith's 1-yard TD run and a drive deep in Michigan territory.

With a chance to pull within a score, Ernest Sazor returned an interception 88 yards for a TD to give the Wolverines a 30-10 lead with 9:01 left to play.

Turnovers were a problem for Betts throughout the game.

Betts' first turnover led to points midway through the second quarter. Ryan Mundy intercepted a tipped pass and returned it 38 yards to set up Garrett Rivas' 31-yard kick.

On Betts' next attempt, cornerback Markus Curry stepped in front of the intended receiver for his first of two interceptions.

No. 9 Ohio State 27, Cincinnati 6: At Columbus, Ohio, Lydell Ross rushed for 141 yards and a touchdown, and the Buckeyes' swarming defense stymied the Bearcats.

Justin Zwick threw two interceptions and had four fumbles in his first start for the Buckeyes. He completed 14 of 26 passes for 213 yards and a touchdown. Backup Troy Smith played far less but produced two scores in three drives, including a TD pass.

Bearcats coach Mark Donato lost his debut to his former employer. He was defensive coordinator for the Buckeyes for three years.

No. 16 Virginia 44, Temple 14: At Philadelphia, Wali Lundy

ran for 104 yards and three touchdowns, and Alvin Pearson returned a punt 70 yards for a score to lead the Cavaliers to an easy opening victory.

The Owls had more fumbles (four) than third-down conversions (two) and lost to a Top 25 team for the 18th straight time.

Marques Hagens finished 17-for-22 for 211 yards and rushed and threw for a touchdown for Virginia, which began the season with its highest ranking since 1998.

No. 17 Auburn 31, La-Monroe 0: At Auburn, Ala., Jason Campbell passed for two touchdowns and Carnell Williams ran for 103 yards as the Tigers unveiled a new offense.

The Tigers' West Coast offense sputtered at times but still fared better than in last year's opening shutout defeat to Southern California that set the stage for a disappointing season.

No. 19 Iowa 39, Kent St. 7: At Iowa City, Iowa, Drew Tate threw two touchdowns in his first start and the Hawkeyes turned in a

dominating defensive performance.

The Hawkeyes held the Golden Panthers to 110 total yards and minus-13 yards rushing.

Kent State, playing without suspended quarterback Joshua Cribbs, crossed midfield just once, late in the third quarter. Iowa linebacker Chad Greenway had two interceptions, returning his second 30 yards for a touchdown in the fourth quarter.

No. 21 Wisconsin 34, Central Florida 6: At Madison, Wis., John Stocco threw two touchdowns passes and ran for another score in his first start for the Badgers.

Anthony Davis rushed for 78 yards and a touchdown for the Badgers but left late in the first half after taking a hard hit at the end of a 21-yard run. The school didn't announce details of Davis' injury.

Davis missed five full games last year with ankle injuries and the Badgers are counting on his return to health, especially with 2003 leading rusher Dwayne Smith out because of a recently discovered heart disorder.

Sharapova, Moya ousted

BY BEN WALKER
The Associated Press

NEW YORK — Maria Sharapova's drive to win another Grand Slam title got dashed Saturday when tennis' newest "It" girl lost to Mary Pierce 4-6, 6-2, 6-3 in the third round of the U.S. Open.

The 17-year-old Wimbledon winner lost the final five games, worn down a bit by her third straight three-set match. Sharapova hurt herself with 14 double-faults, including two in the game in which Pierce broke her to take a 5-3 lead in the final set.

The seventh-seeded Russian wore a black ribbon on the front of her dress, in memory of the more than 340 people — nearly half of them children — killed in a hostage-taking situation in her country this week.

"There are a lot more important things going on in the world than my loss," Sharapova said. "It's just an example of what can happen in life and that my loss doesn't mean anything."

The 29-year-old Pierce, a former Australian Open and French Open champion, knelt down near her changeover chair after it was over.

"Just a little prayer. Thanks for this opportunity," she said.

Little Olivier Rochus pulled off another big surprise, ousting third-seeded Carlos Moya 4-6, 6-4, 6-3, 6-7 (5), 7-5 to reach the fourth round.

Only 5 feet 5, Rochus was the shortest man in the men's draw and no match for Moya's power. But the Belgian played with spirit, bouncing all over the court, winning 35 points on the 39 times he changed the net.

When it was over and they met to shake hands, Rochus looked square into the 6-foot-3 Moya's chest and congratulated the man who swept him in the bracket sets in the Olympic three-set match.

"For me, that was the greatest win in my career," Rochus said. "That was the best, for everything — the game, the crowd."

Moya became the highest-seeded player on either side to lose this week. Ranked 100th and with a career losing record, Rochus had never won in four previous appearances at Flushing Meadows before this week.

"He never won?" Moya said. "He's been doing

very well this tournament so far. I would like to be in his position."

Top-seeded Roger Federer and Justine Henin-Hardenne also made it to the fourth round, in much easier fashion.

Federer moved a step closer to becoming the first man in 16 years to win three Grand Slam titles in a season, defeating No. 31 Fabrice Santoro 6-0, 6-4, 7-6 (7). Henin-Hardenne defeated Lisa Raymond 6-4, 6-3.

Federer has won three of the past five majors. In 2004, his 61-6 record and tour-leading eight titles include the Australian Open and Wimbledon. In 1988, Mats Wilander won the Australian, French and U.S. Opens, losing only in the Wimbledon quarterfinals.

"Many guys have the chance to beat me. It's not getting easier from here," he said.

"Maybe I've had a very dominant season so far, but I always look at it this way — it's a new match, it's a new day."

"I have to again prove myself. I don't think about who's going to stop me."

Federer finished with 56 winners and 37 misuses, an impressive ratio. Santoro had 16 winners and 27 errors.

Federer erased the only break point he faced, while breaking the Frenchman four times.

It's the fourth straight year Federer has made the round of 16 at Flushing Meadows, but he's never been past that stage. To get to a possible quarterfinal showdown against two-time Open champion Andre Agassi, Federer will have to beat No. 16 Andre Pavel.

Agassi dispatched No. 25 Jiri Novak 6-4, 6-2, 6-3 on Saturday.

Also on the men's side, Pavel topped Lee Hyung-taik 6-4, 6-2, 1-6, 6-4, No. 22 Donnik Herry bested No. 15 Paradorn Srichaphan 7-6 (8), 6-3, 6-3; and No. 19 Nicolas Kiefer beat Thomas Johansson 6-4, 6-0, 6-1.

Top women Lindsay Davenport and Venus Williams were scheduled to play later on Saturday. Still, Anna Asagoe eliminated No. 13 Paola Serrano, a French Open semifinalist, 6-4, 6-4; No. 14 Nadia Petrova defeated Silvia Farina Elia 4-6, 7-6 (6), 7-6 (3); and No. 12 Daria Pavluchenko beat Anna Chakvetadze 6-4, 6-2.

U.S. topples Slovakia for its first victory in World Cup of Hockey

BY ANDRES YBARRA
The Associated Press

ST. PAUL, Minn. — Upset by the lackluster play of some veterans, Team USA coach Ron Wilson benched Bret Hedberg and three other regulars.

Wilson described the move as "the most difficult decision I've made as a coach."

But it worked.

With younger, fresher legs, the U.S. team finally showed some energy in the World Cup of Hockey, beating Slovakia 3-1 Friday for its first victory in the tournament.

"Now, we have an opportunity to still play here on Tuesday, which is a great boost for us," Dallas Stars forward Mike Modano said.

Bill Guerin, Jason Blake and Bryan Smolinski scored for the Americans, who moved into third place in the North American Division. Slovakia (0-2) dropped to fourth.

If Russia beats Slovakia on Sunday, the United States will finish third in the North American pool and play the second-place team in its pool, either Canada or Russia.

"We need to look at each other and start over again," Slovakian forward Marian Gaborik said.

After being outworked against Canada and Russia, the Americans responded with their best offensive output of the tournament, outscoring Slovakia 39-17. The U.S. had 24 shots against Canada and 21 against Russia, scoring only one goal in each game.

Wilson started goaltender Rick DiPietro, resting Roberto Esche after the Philadelphia Flyers' netminder stopped 72 shots against Canada and Russia. DiPietro didn't face nearly the same barrage against Slovakia, making 16 saves.



Bill Guerin, right, beat Slovakian goalie Jan Lasak, left, on a breakaway with 3:43 remaining to cap the scoring Friday in the Americans' 3-1 victory.

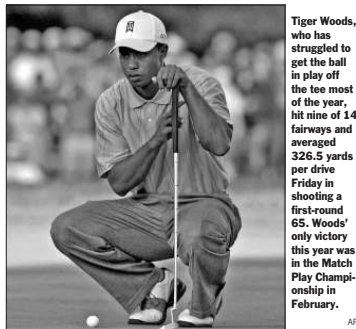
But the Americans were more physical against Slovakia and played smothering defense in the second and third periods.

"We did a much better job of ice, establishing our forecheck," Wilson said.

After Thursday night's 1-3 loss to the Russians, a frustrated Wilson shuffled his lineup because the team lacked energy. He scratched Hull, Craig Conroy, Brian Rolston and Eric Weinrich. Wilson said Hull took the decision "like a professional."

"We just try to get better as the tournament goes on, and we feel like maybe we turned the corner in knowing what we need to do," Modano said.

Asked if he would keep the same lineup for the next game, Wilson said: "If I can procrastinate on that one, I will."



Woods, Palmer lead PGA event in Mass.

The Associated Press

NORTON, Mass. — Even before he took the first-round lead of the Deutsche Bank Championship, Tiger Woods was having a good day.

Mark O'Meara, Woods' neighbor and mentor, was the leader in the clubhouse when Woods teed off in the afternoon at the TPC of Boston. Woods then went out and shot a 6-under 65 to tie for the lead with Ryan Palmer, one stroke ahead of O'Meara and two others.

"Any time you have one of your best buds there top of the board, it's always cool," Woods said. "Mark, boy, he's been like a big brother, really. To have him basically take me under his wing and show me the ropes of the tour — I couldn't have asked for a better person to be in my life."

Woods, who's won just once this year to jeopardize his world No. 1 ranking, has a first-round lead for the first time since he won the 2003 Western Open. He has won eight of the past 10 tournaments when he's led or shared the lead after Round 1.

"It's certainly nice [that] ... I don't have to go out there and shoot a round like this just to try and make the cut," Woods said. "It's nice to be able to actually get off to a positive start like this."

A sort of unofficial host of the tournament that benefits the Tiger Woods Foundation, Woods has promised to donate his winnings to the charity. He makes the same pledge in the Target World Challenge, an event he has won once and finished second in twice. O'Meara, 47, won in Dubai this year but he admitted he didn't give up to be a threat on the 7,415-yard, par-71 course.

"Gold is a fickle game and it's been a battle the last two or three years," he said. "We've certainly seen some of the older players play pretty well, so hopefully I can keep it up this week."

O'Meara was tied with Cameron Beckman and Jonathan Byrd at 5-under. Five were tied at two strokes back and Vijay Singh, who could take over the top spot



in the world rankings if he finishes higher than Woods, was among 10 tied at 3-under.

Adam Scott, who won the inaugural event last year, was four strokes back with a 69.

Starting on No. 10, Woods was 4-under on the back nine and 2-under on the front. He didn't make any putts from more than 20 feet, but hit nine of 14 fairways to help set up short birdie putts.

Jimenez leads Euro Masters

CRANS-SUR-SIERRE, Switzerland — Miguel Angel Jimenez shot 5-under-par 66 Saturday to regain the lead in the European Masters with Ryder Cup teammates Luke Donald and Sergio Garcia one stroke behind. Donald carded a 65 and Garcia, the leader after two rounds, shot 68.

The three are the only Ryder Cup players in the field. But they should be wary in Sunday's final round with four players just four strokes off the lead: Eduardo Romero (67), Ernie Els (66), Graeme McDowell (66) and Craig Spence (66).

Defending champion Els made three birdies on the last five holes.

Donald's 65 was the best of the day, highlighted by five birdies in six holes around the turn, and an eagle on the par-5 14th with a 50-foot putt.

Kim ahead by four in LPGA Star Farm Classic

SPRINGFIELD, Ill. — Christina Kim followed a record-tying opening round with a 6-under 66 on Friday to take a four-stroke lead midway through the LPGA Star Farm Classic.

One day after matching the course record of 10-under 62, Kim finished at 16-under 128 at Rail Golf Course.

Cristie Kerr surged into contention, matching her career-best with a 9-under 63 to get to 12-under 132. Jennifer Rosales moved to 11-under after a second-round 7-under 65.

SPORTS



Final preseason start shows
Palmer ready to take over
as Bengals QB, Page 23

Days are growing short

Tight playoff races, milestones promise exciting final month

BY BEN WALKER

The Associated Press

For Barry Bonds, Ichiro Suzuki and half the teams in the major leagues, Labor Day means one thing: Be it playoff races or record chases, there's still a lot of work to be done.

Ray Durham, for one, is eager to begin the stretch drive.

"The month of September is fun," the San Francisco lead-off man said. "I've always heard people say they don't really watch the first half of the season anyway because the most exciting time in baseball is after the All-Star break. It's true."

"I think a bad week or so can definitely kill a team that's in contention. Or vice versa, a team can have a good week or a good two weeks the last month of the season and could win the wild card — like the Marlins did. It propelled them into the playoffs and into the World Series," he said.

What a wild card scramble it is this year, heading down to the final regular-season game on Oct. 3. And for good reason — baseball's last two champions, Anaheim and then Florida — came from that extra postseason slot.

World Series MVP Josh Beckett and Florida are now making a late push in the NL, so are Roger Clemens and his Houston Astros, and San Diego is in it, too. So is Mr. Bonds, with his 697 career home runs and a shot at a seventh MVP award.

Going into the weekend, those teams were all within three games of the NL wild-card leaders, Sammy Sosa and the Chicago Cubs.

That's good news for the pursuers, based on recent history. No club has ever overcome a September deficit of more than three games to win the wild card, according to the Elias Sports Bureau.

The 2001 Cardinals and 2002 Giants were both exactly three games back early in the month before earning their way in.

"It's almost like it was last season — we know we can come back," Marlins manager Jack McKeon said.

Pedro Martinez, Curt Schilling and the Boston Red Sox showed signs of pulling away for the AL wild card as they won nine straight going into the weekend, dropping back Anaheim and Texas.

With six games left against the New York Yankees, the Red Sox still were within striking range of their age-old rivals. Then again, Derek Jeter, Gary Sheffield the Yankees are looking for a lot more than the wild card, despite a rotation that's been shaky of late.

Only another championship will satisfy George Steinbrenner and anyone else who takes pride in the pinstripes.

"The Boss is always going to give you the opportunity to get there because he's going to spend the money to put people in your clubhouse. I think everybody is very disappointed if the ultimate doesn't happen," Yankees manager Joe Torre said.

September

Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4
8	9	10	11
15	16	17	18
22	23	24	25
29	30		

AP photos

N.Y. Yankees' Hideki Matsui and Alex Rodriguez

PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY CHRISTOPHER SIX/Stars and Stripes



Brown loses to Orioles, then breaks left hand punching clubhouse wall

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Sharapova falls to Pierce in U.S. Open; Federer reaches fourth round

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13th-ranked Cal breaks loose in second half, routs Air Force

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